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ABSTRACT

This review of the Strathcona County school system (Alberta, Canada) makes recommendations based on information gathered in 1986. Following an introductory chapter, chapter 2 summarizes findings and recommendations. The review involved surveys of employees, community members, and community groups. Recommendations concern organization, evaluation, public input, and reporting to the board. Chapter 3 characterizes organization and staffing, financial indicators, and enrollment. Methods of reviewing system components are described in chapter 4; chapter 5 synthesizes significant findings. Governance and administrative areas, examined in chapter 6, involve policymaking, planning, budgeting, and community relations. Recommendations are to improve budgeting, board reporting, and community relations. Chapter 7 reports on organizational matters. Suggestions are made to formalize corporate services relationships, reorganize educational programming, and to act on employee concerns. Program management issues covered in chapter 8 concern improved coordination of planning and education. In chapter 9, recommendations for resource management include strengthening staff policies, developing professional development plans, and reviewing the teacher evaluation process. Chapter 10 investigates support services. Suggestions are made for achieving greater effectiveness in data processing and facilities management. Five appendices comprise nearly one-half of the report, including the following: review criteria of system components; employee attitude survey results; resident survey results; and responses from parental groups. (CJH)

ED285245

System Review Design
County of Strathcona No. 20

Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney

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Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney
Management Consultants

Project Report

REVIEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

PHASE 1: SYSTEM REVIEW

Prepared for

County of Strathcona
Sherwood Park, Alberta

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I

INTRODUCTION

In November 1985, the Strathcona County Board of Education commissioned a Review Development Project. The objectives of the project were to:

- Develop a set of procedures for the review of the school system at a system level.
- Review the system including gathering data useful for planning and decision making as well as for further review.
- Develop a plan and procedure for the regular review of the school system.
- Develop alternative future scenarios if the system were to be sub-divided.

The project was divided into three phases: the system review, specific evaluations, and future scenarios. This report presents the results of the first phase. A separate volume, "System Review Guidelines" provides a plan and procedures for regular system reviews.

Chapter II contains an overall summary of our findings and recommendations. Chapter III describes the Strathcona County School System. Chapter IV describes the methodology we developed for conducting the system review. Chapters V to X report our findings and conclusions, beginning with general observations in Chapter V, followed by specific observations by major function in subsequent chapters.

The report has been prepared based on information gathered during the first half of 1986. Our observations reflect the situation at that time. Changes since then may not be fully recognized in the report.

The report may appear critical in parts. This is because a system review concentrates on improvement opportunities rather than on areas that are well managed. Any organization, however well run, can be improved. Such is the focus of much of this report.

A school system review is one of the five evaluation components of the provincial Management and Finance Plan. The methodology for system reviews is still somewhat in the experimental stage. We hope that this report contributes to the development of a relevant and workable methodology.

We wish to express our appreciation for the excellent assistance and cooperation we received from the Board and staff at all levels in the school system and from members of the public in conducting this review.

II

HIGHLIGHTS

This chapter summarizes the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations contained in subsequent chapters.

A. CHARACTERIZING THE SYSTEM

The Strathcona School System is a county system with strong organizational links to the municipality. It serves the County of Strathcona and the City of Fort Saskatchewan. It is the fifth largest in Alberta, with around 12,000 students, 29 schools, and over 900 school staff. The pupil/teacher ratio is 16.2.

Eight County councillors sit on the Board. Central corporate services are provided to both the school system and the municipality: Personnel, Transportation, Facilities, Finance, Data Processing, Vehicles and Equipment, and Communications.

After rapid expansion up to 1979, enrolments and funding have gradually levelled off. Enrolment has in fact declined in recent years and is forecast to decline further. The 1986 expenditure budget was $57.2 million.

B. DEVELOPING SYSTEM REVIEW METHODOLOGY

We adopted a value for money methodology to define a framework for conducting the system review. We constructed a model of the system functions in six categories: governance and administration, personnel, programming, support services, enrolment and community relations. We analyzed each of these categories into inputs, processes, inputs, outputs and objectives. Each category consisted of several components for which in turn we developed more detailed models with the same basic structure. We then examined a sample of these components from the point of view of value for money: whether resources were acquired economically and used efficiently and whether operations were carried out effectively. We developed criteria for assessing each component in terms of value for money.

Within this basic review framework, we used three main review techniques: surveys, interviews and documentation review. We conducted three surveys of: employees, randomly-selected community members by telephone, and discussion groups with interested community representatives.

Finally we summarized the methodology in a separate document entitled "System Review Guidelines."

C. STRATEGIC OPTIONS

The system exists to serve the public in one of the most important sectors of society. The system is also publicly funded. Resources are limited in relation to the present and potential demand for programs. Programs are delivered by professional educators who have their own standards and ethics, but who are also public servants. These characteristics imply certain requirements for the major features of any educational system:

- An organization structure that fosters professional judgement within appropriate levels of management authority and accountability between:
  - Teachers and administrators.
  - Schools, central office and the Board.
  - The Board, the public and government.
- Evaluation mechanisms that monitor staff performance, program delivery, student achievement, and more generally school and system effectiveness so that accountability relationships are strong.
- Significant public, particularly parent, involvement in the school system at the school and Board levels.
- Relevant, timely, and accurate accountability information to the Board and the province.

A combination of these four themes, which run throughout the report, have to be pursued to maximize system effectiveness. Each addresses, from a different point of view, the issue of accountability for the effective use of limited resources, or value for money. In all four areas the Board and the administration had achieved much in recent years and had in progress or under consideration further improvements. We summarize our recommendations in these areas below.

1. Organization

a) Corporate services

Certain corporate service functions report to the Superintendent of Schools. Others report to the Associate Commissioner and through him to the Chief Commissioner. Each group serves both the educational and the municipal system. In general relationships have improved considerably

over the last two years, However, we still observed a tendency for each group serve better the system to which it reports.

We believe you should strengthen the corporate services concept. All functions except for budgeting and professional personnel should be centralized under the Associate Commissioner who should report to both the Chief Commissioner and the Superintendent.

b) Central office

Central office is organized into five departments: Curriculum and Instruction, Pupil Services, Planning and Operations, Personnel, and the Assistant Secretary. The degree of contact between central office and schools is insufficient. And central office staff have a wide range of responsibilities and many new initiatives underway that are creating heavy workloads.

In our view you should structure the educational programming activities so that each school principal has a main contact at central office, not at the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent level. And this structure should also provide for improved coordination between educational programming functions.

We propose that you merge the Curriculum and and Instruction and Pupil Services departments under one Assistant Superintendent. This department should be organized into separate divisions dealing with schools, students, programs, and learning resources. The School division would provide a focal point for school principals for all central office services. You should also continue to rotate the role of Deputy Superintendent among the Assistant Superintendents.

2. Evaluation

While school, program, teacher and student evaluation were not part of the scope of our review, we did look at the system's overall approach to school and teacher evaluation.

a) School evaluation

You have adopted an extensive school evaluation program. However this program limits the number of schools you can evaluate to two or three per year. While staff are satisfied with the content of the process, the level of effort is a serious problem. The level of school evaluation you conduct amounts to an evaluation of the school principal and a partial evaluation of teachers and some programs.

b) Teacher evaluation

Teacher evaluation policy is in place and represents a major tool for monitoring and improving teacher performance. After certification, teachers are supposed to be evaluated every three years. It is not always done as frequently as required and consumes a large amount of principal time. However it is one of the few methods available to the principal to monitor and improve teacher performance and thereby ensure that educational objectives are met.

We believe that teacher evaluation should be carried out annually on a formal basis and more frequently informally. Principals should, in discussion with the teacher, set goals, assess achievement against goals, and discuss ways of improvement.

Thus we consider that simplification of both the school and the teacher evaluation processes are required, not to diminish them, but indeed to strengthen them. Therefore we have agreed with you that a more detailed review of the school and teacher evaluation processes will be the focus of Phase II of the Review Development Project.

3. Public input

Information on community attitudes and concerns is an essential input to Board and school planning. And explanation of Board and school policies and decisions serves the basic need of the community to know what is happening in the system. In general community members appear to be satisfied with the overall performance of the Board. However they are disatisfied with their degree of participation in school and system policy making, and with the information received on school and system activities.

Although the Board and many principals have made strong attempts to encourage public participation, we suggest that you have to continually explore and pursue all possible avenues. The Board should establish a policy on minimum mechanisms for obtaining community input and disseminating information. Regular parent groups should be established for each school. You have to continually strive to increase the sense of accountability of school administrators and teachers to the parents of their students and to all taxpayers in general.

4. Reporting to the Board

The Board can exercise its mandate effectively in terms of setting policies and allocating resources only if it receives information on system performance in terms of resources planned and consumed and program results intended and achieved. Since incentives in the system to be efficient and effective are few, those vehicles that provide a means for assessing efficiency and effectiveness should be used to their fullest potential.

One of the key areas in which reporting can be improved is in the budget format and related key cost and performance indicators. Budgets for both schools and programs could be more clearly presented. More information on performance can be provided in terms of historical trends for student achievements and by school and program. Despite the reluctance of most principals, we also consider that school-based budgeting would serve to enhance accountability for financial management.

D. MINOR ISSUES

The above sections summarize the major issues with which we were concerned during the review. We reviewed many other areas, including policy making, strategic planning, employee concerns, coordination of in-service and professional development, human resource planning and staffing, and support services. We made relatively minor recommendations in some of these areas. However we also found many excellent features of good educational planning and delivery that in total serve to support the widely-expressed opinion amongst your professional staff that the system is one of the best of its kind.

III

UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

In this chapter we discuss the major parameters of the Strathcona education system in terms of:

- An overall description.
- Organization and staffing.
- Financial indicators.
- Enrolment.

A. THE SYSTEM IS THE FIFTH LARGEST IN ALBERTA

The Board of Education is responsible for providing educational services to the County of Strathcona and the City of Fort Saskatchewan. The 1985/86 enrolment in grades 1 to 12 is 11,370, plus about 700 kindergarten students. To serve these students the board operates 29 schools: 17 elementary, 3 elementary/junior high, 5 junior high and 4 senior high schools. Seven schools are in Fort Saskatchewan, the balance in the County. The Board employed a total of 729 teacher FTEs and 185 classified staff in schools. This resulted in a pupil/teacher ratio of 16.2 in 1985/1986.

The growth since 1956 has been substantial. Then there were 2,200 students, 15 schools and 82 teachers.

The 1986 budget amounts to $57.2 million, an increase of 3.6% over 1985. Of this total, $35.7 million is provided by provincial grants and other sources of funds, leaving $21.5 million to be financed by municipal assessments.

B. THE ORGANIZATION IS COMPLEX

The organization exhibits two key characteristics, one reflecting the County structure and the provision of services to both the Board of Education and the municipality and the other reflecting the scope of the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools.

1. Corporate services are centralized

Under the County structure, County Council (including trustees at large) approves the education budget. Otherwise the Board has full authority under the School Act. However, in Strathcona there are also strong organizational as well as legal links between the municipality and the education system. In particular, "corporate services" are provided jointly to both organizations. Some of the corresponding organizational functions reside in the education central office and report to the Superintendent of Schools. Others reside in the municipality and report to the Chief Commissioner.

The specific corporate services organizational relationships are as follows:

- Personnel, and Planning and Operations, which includes Transportation and Facilities, are headed by Assistant Superintendents who report to the Superintendent.

- Finance, Data Processing, Vehicles and Equipment, and Communications report to an Associate Commissioner, Corporate Services, who in turn reports to the Chief Commissioner.

Each of these positions is responsible for providing services in its functional area to both the school system and the municipality.

In addition the Assistant County Secretary, who reports to the Superintendent of Schools and acts as secretary of the School Board, has a functional relationship to the Associate Commissioner, Government Services who is also the County Secretary.

Overseeing these activities is the County Committee consisting of Board and Council members.

These relationships are shown in the system organization chart illustrated in Exhibit III-1.

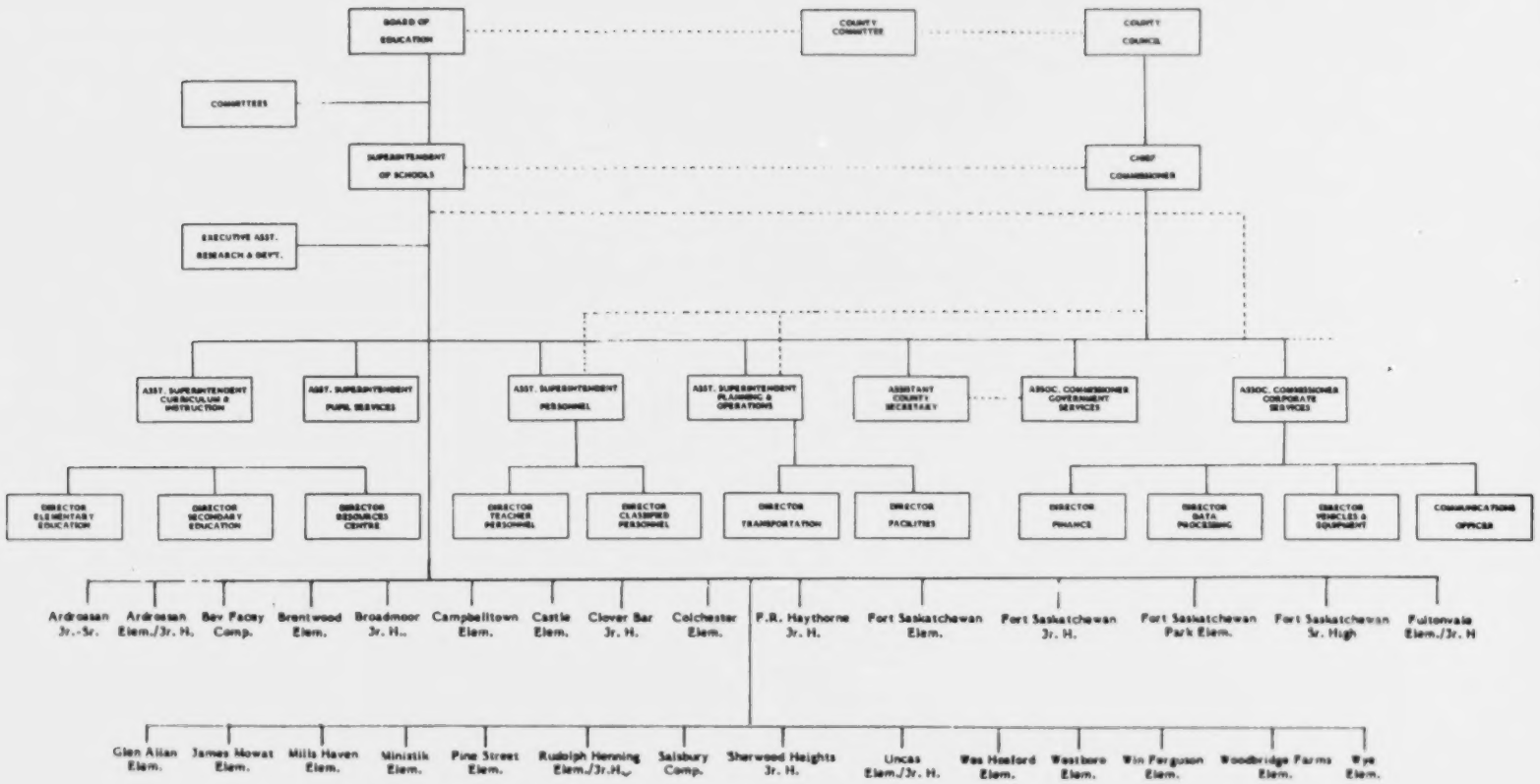
2. The school system organization is very flat

The jurisdiction of the Board of Education includes the City of Fort Saskatchewan, which is of course not part of the County of Strathcona.

The Board of Education consists of eight County councillors, four urban and four rural, and six members at large, three from the City of Fort Saskatchewan and three from the Hamlet of Sherwood Park.

In addition to the Assistant Superintendents, Personnel, and Planning and Operations, and the Assistant County Secretary, two other Assistant Superintendents report to the Superintendent: Pupil Services and Curriculum and Instruction. Together these five positions supervise the central office activities.

EXHIBIT III-1
System organization



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Each of the 29 school principals also reports directly to the Superintendent. Thus in total 35 positions (including an executive assistant) report to the Superintendent.

The central office organization is illustrated in Exhibit III-2. This exhibit includes the corporate services located in the municipal structure that provide services to the central office and schools. The major central office functions are shown in Exhibit III-2 under each of the respective departments. Central office is essentially organized by function (as opposed to by area or by sector).

C. BUDGETS AND EXPENDITURES ARE LEVELLING OFF

The Board of Education's sources of funds are illustrated in Exhibit III-3. Owing to declining enrolment, revenue fell slightly from 1985 to 1986. Thus in order to achieve a 3.6% increase in total funds the supplementary requisition had to be increased by 11.4%. The supplementary requisition is shared in a ratio of approximately 3 to 1 between the County of Strathcona and the City of Fort Saskatchewan.

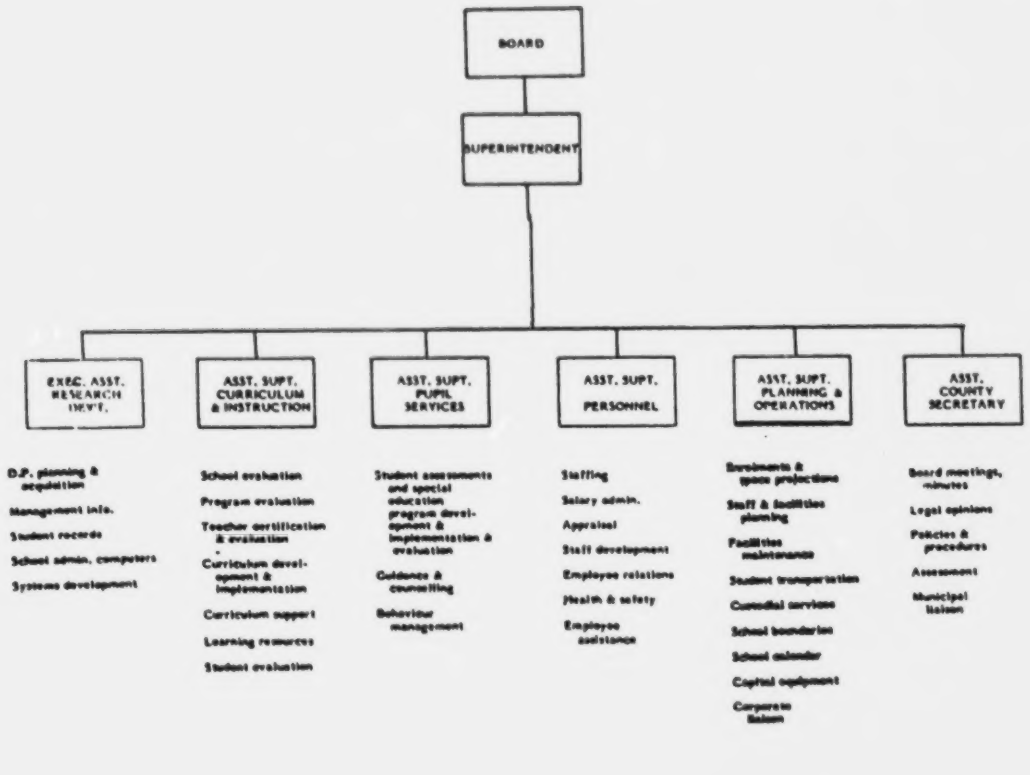
Provincial revenue has remained static for the last five years. Small increases in the total revenue in those five years have been met through relatively larger increases in County and Fort assessments, as can be seen from Exhibit III-4. Exhibit III-5 shows that in the last three years most of the increase in local assessments has been provided by the County rather than the Fort.

Personnel costs represent by far the largest proportion of total expenditures. Exhibit III-6 presents the 1986 expenditure budget of $57.2 million by the main budget categories, and the percentage of staff costs to total costs by category. Virtually 60% of the total costs are in the personnel category. This includes a small amount for personnel department -- the bulk represents professional and classified staff in schools. Two-thirds (66.9%) of the total costs represent staff salaries, benefits and related costs. Excluding Corporate Services staff costs represent almost 90% of the budget.

Exhibits III-7 and III-8 illustrate the cost trends per student and per teaching FTE. The cost per student has increased by about 13% per annum from 1979 to 1985, from just over $2,000 per student in 1979 to almost $5,000 per student in 1986. The cost per teacher FTE has increased by about 11% per annum over the same period from just under $40,000 to $80,000 per FTE.

In real terms however the annual increases have been much more modest. The cost per student in constant dollars has increased by about 5.7% per annum and the cost per teacher FTE by about 4% per annum. Furthermore the increases have been much less in recent years compared to earlier years. Exhibit III-9 shows that increases of 20% and more per annum were common in the early '80's. In the last three years the increases have been between 0% and 10%.

EXHIBIT III-2
Central office organization



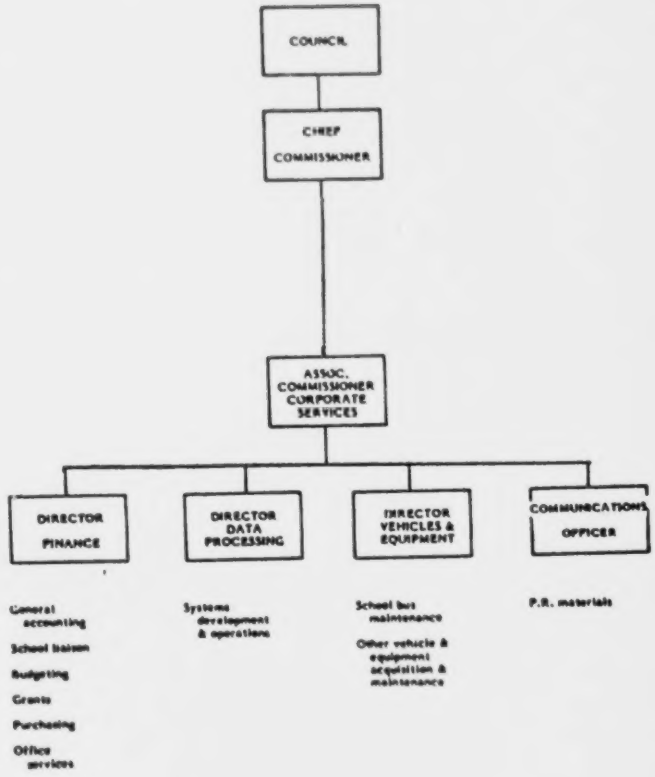


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EXHIBIT III-3
Financing

	1985	1986	% Change
	$ Million		
Revenue	35.9	35.7	-0.6
Supplementary requisition	19.3	21.5	+11.4
	55.2	57.2	+3.6
County	14.34	16.51	+15.1
Fort Saskatchewan	4.96	4.99	+0.6
	19.3	21.5	+11.4

EXHIBIT III-4
Revenue trends (1979-1986)

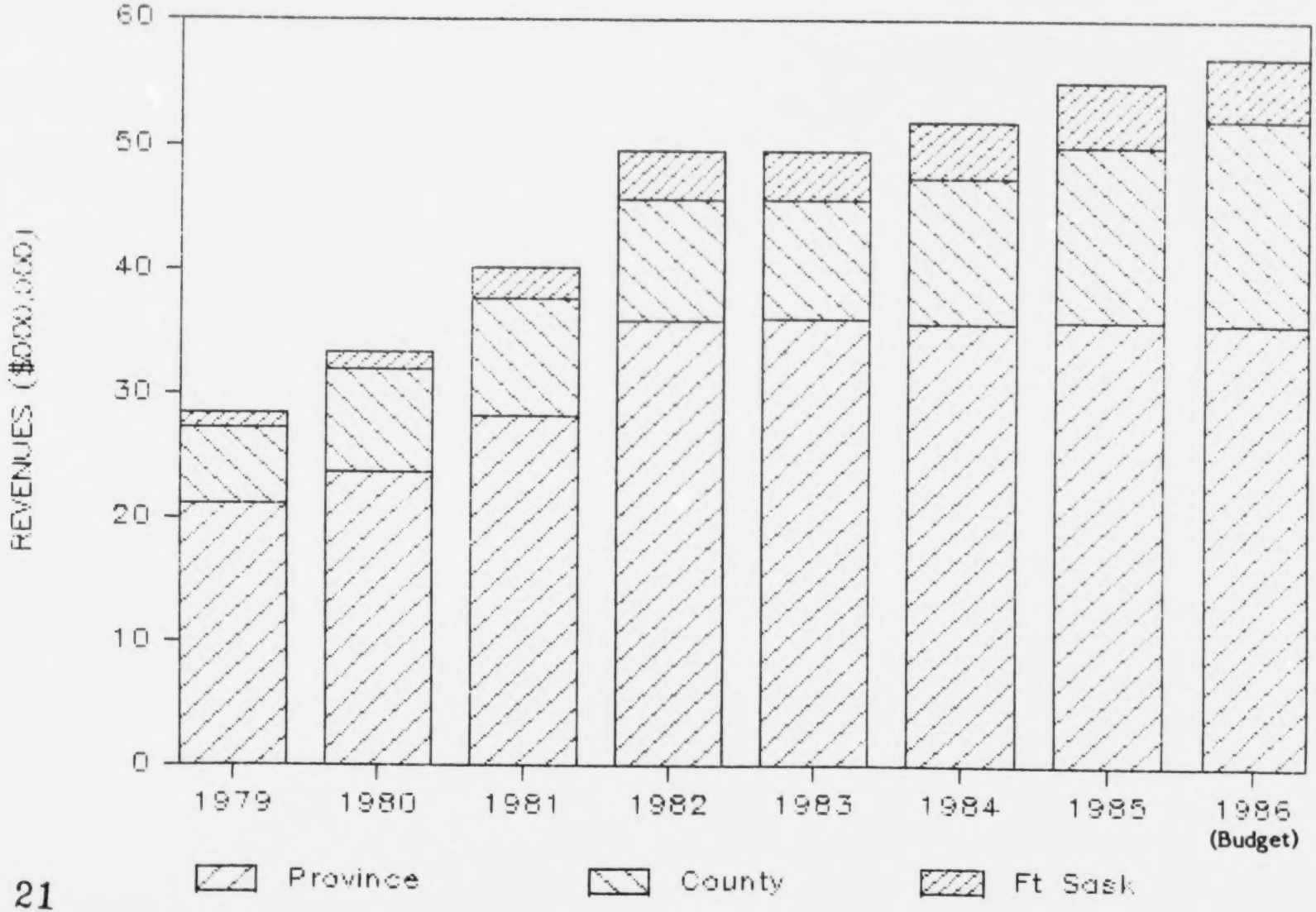


EXHIBIT III-5
Revenue trends (1979-1986)

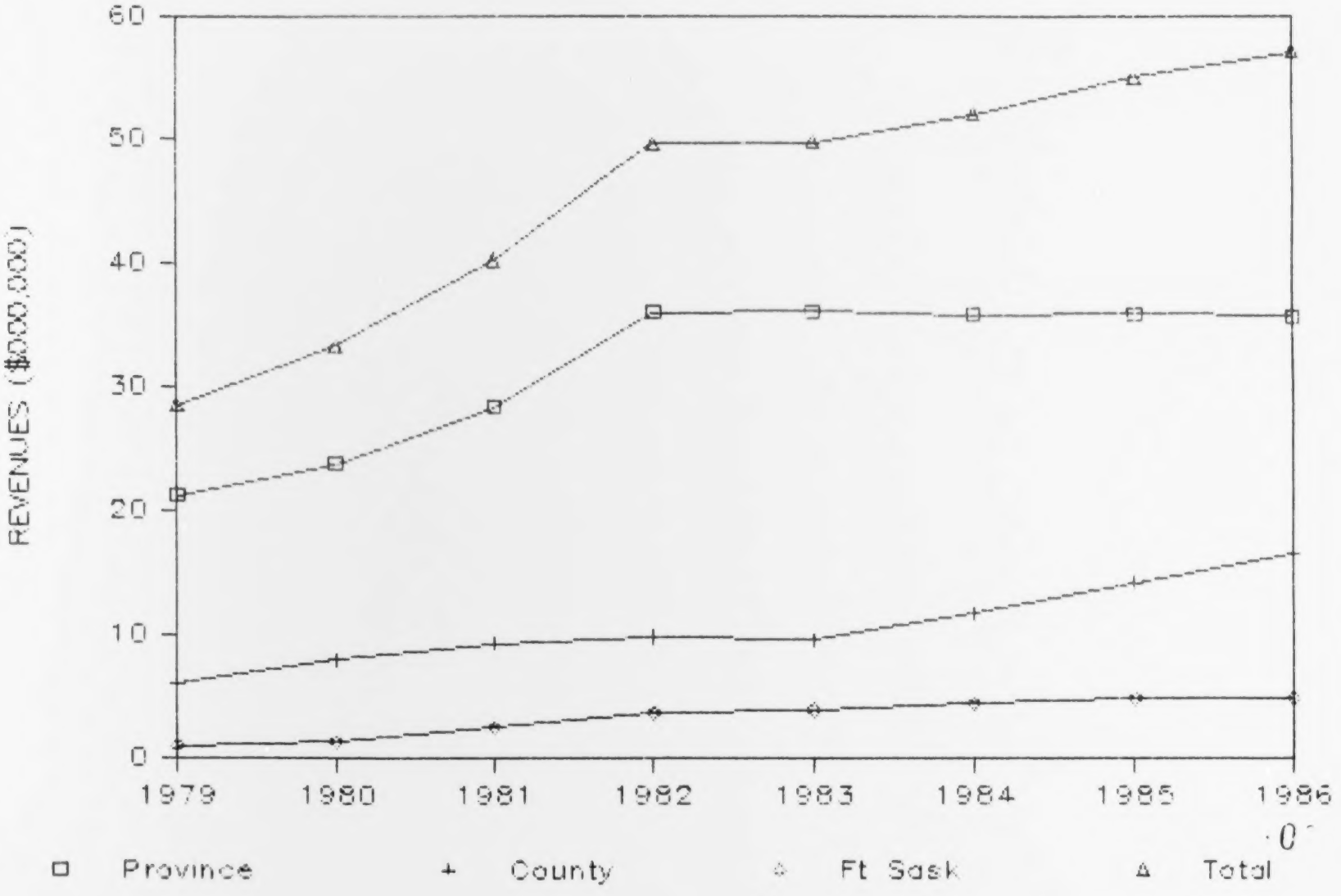


EXHIBIT III-6
1986 expenditure budget ($ million)

	$ Million	% of Total	Staff as % of Total
Legislative	0.3	0.5	--
Administration	0.8	1.5	0.8
Personnel	33.7	58.8	58.8
Curriculum & Instruction	2.2	3.8	1.7
Pupil Services	1.1	1.9	1.1
Schools	1.6	2.9	0.2
School equipment	0.6	1.0	--
Corporate Services	17.0	29.6	4.3
	57.2	100.0	66.9

EXHIBIT III-7
Student cost trends

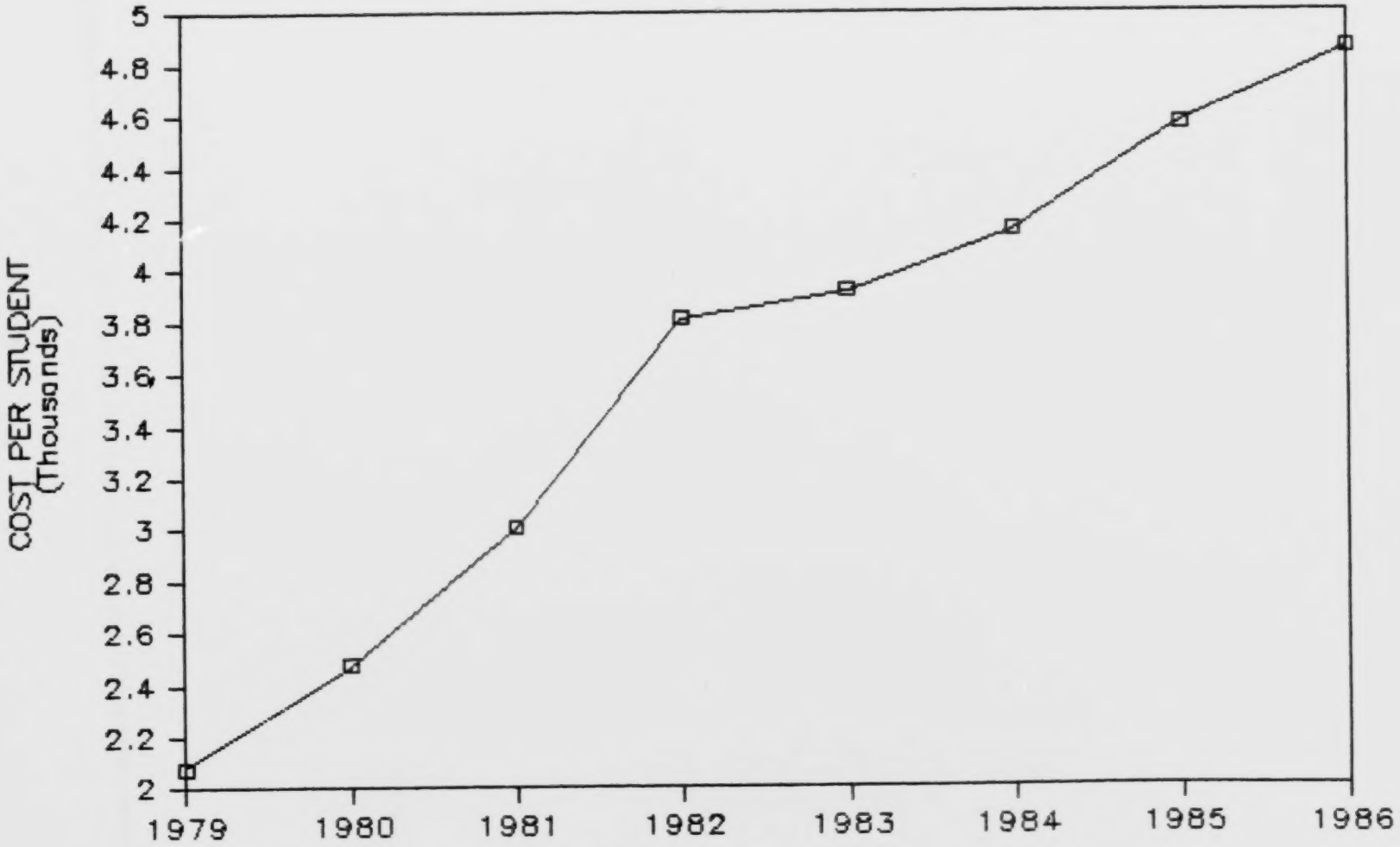


EXHIBIT III-8
Teaching F.T.E. cost trends

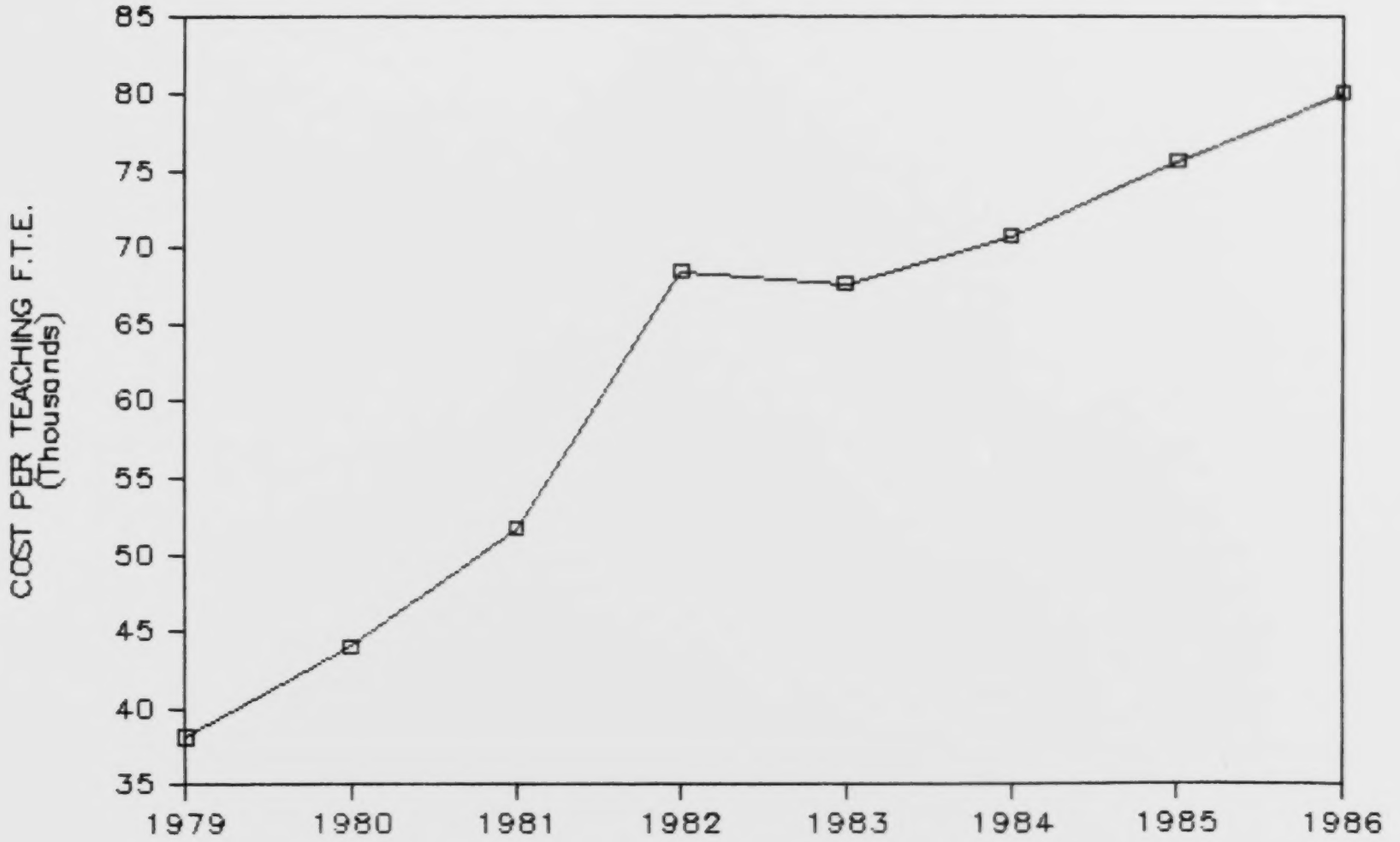
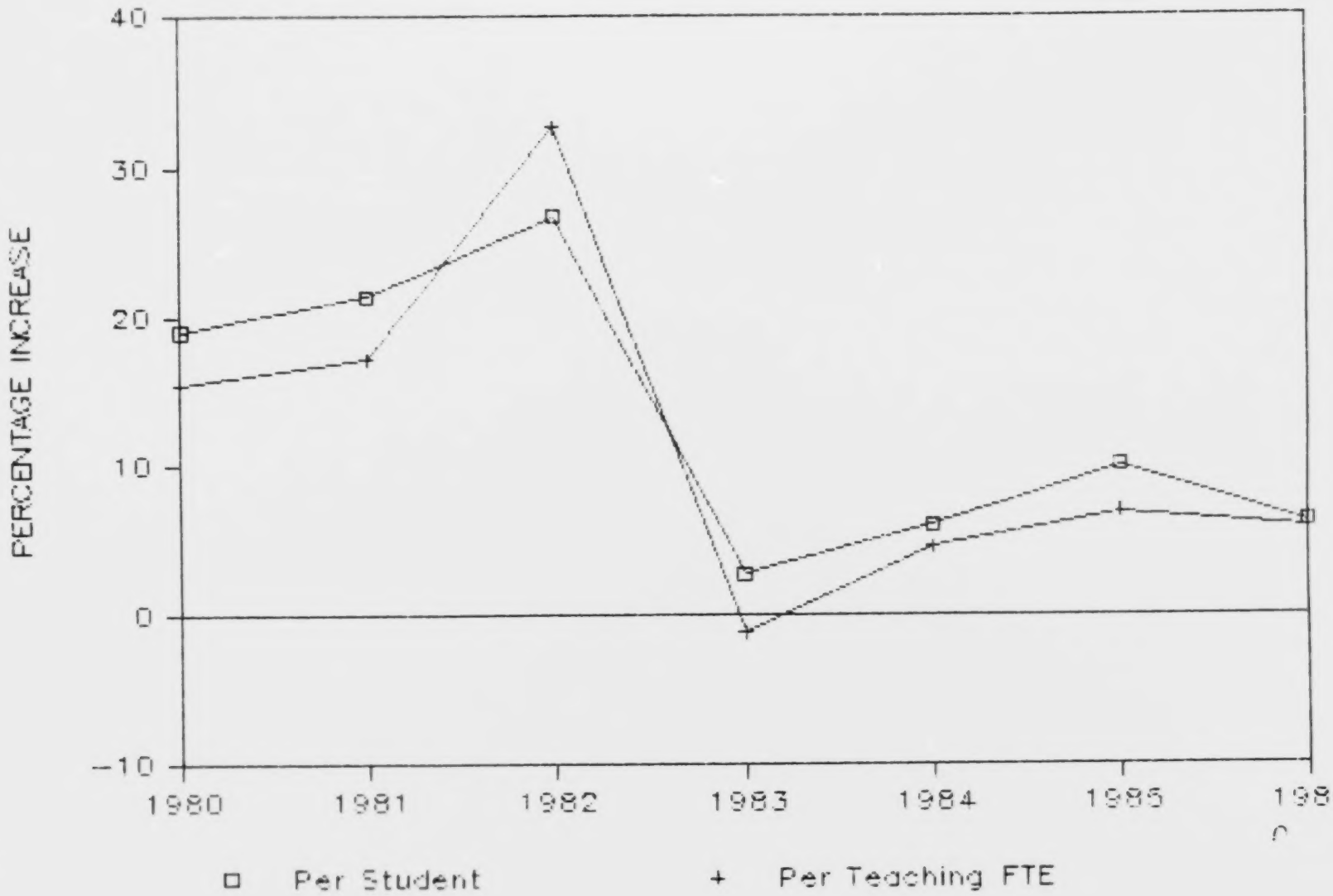


EXHIBIT III-9
Annual % increases in costs per student, per teaching FTE



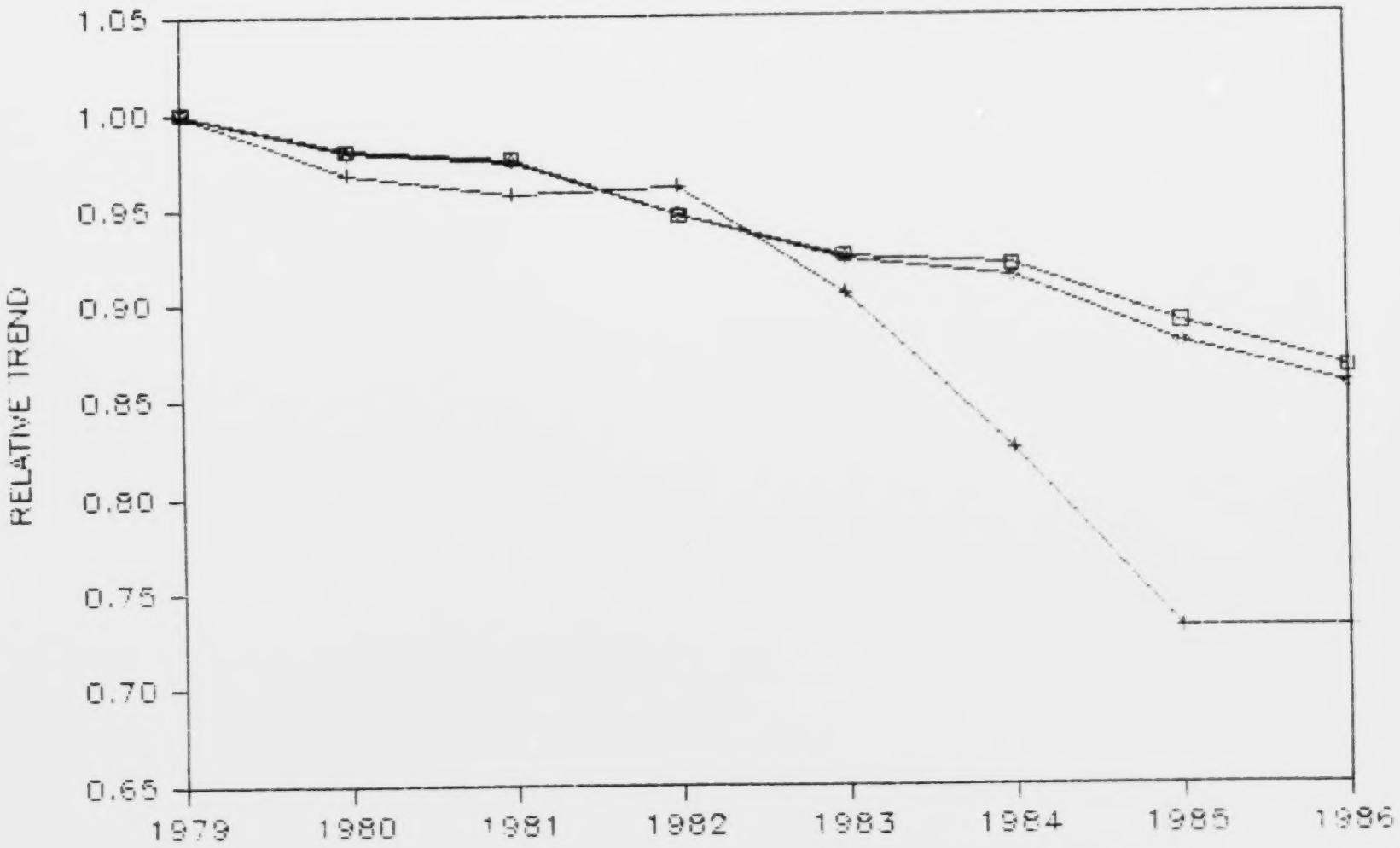
D. ENROLMENT IS EXPECTED TO DECLINE

Enrolment has been steadily declining from 12,800 in 1979 to a forecast of 11,100 in 1986/87 for grades 1 to 12. Kindergarten enrolment has also fallen from 954 in 1979 to an expected 698 in 1986. The relative trends for grades 1 to 12 and kindergarten are illustrated in Exhibit III-10. From 1984 to 1985 total enrolment dropped by about 4%. However the elementary and kindergarten enrolment dropped by 5.5%.

The system faces a significant potential reduction in future enrolment. The implications of the lower enrolment in the elementary grades can be seen more clearly by comparing the average enrolment by grade. The average enrolment for grades 1 to 5 in 1985/86 was 832. The average enrolment for grades 6 to 12 was 986. Thus the enrolment per primary grade is about 16% lower than the junior and high school grades. Assuming primary enrolment continues at the present level, the total enrolment for grades 1 to 12 would be about 10,000 in six to seven years' time, compared to 11,400 in 1986/86, a reduction of about 9%. However your own projections, which take into account birth rates and migration rates, indicate that enrolment might be as low as 9,500 by 1991.

Because of the growth of special programs you have not decreased the number of teaching FTEs as rapidly as the enrolment has declined. Therefore, the pupil/teacher ratio has gradually declined from over 18 in 1979 to about 16 in 1985/86.

EXHIBIT III-10
Relative enrolment trends (1979-1986)



IV

DEVELOPING SYSTEM EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

In this chapter we describe the series of models that we have adopted to provide the framework for system evaluation.

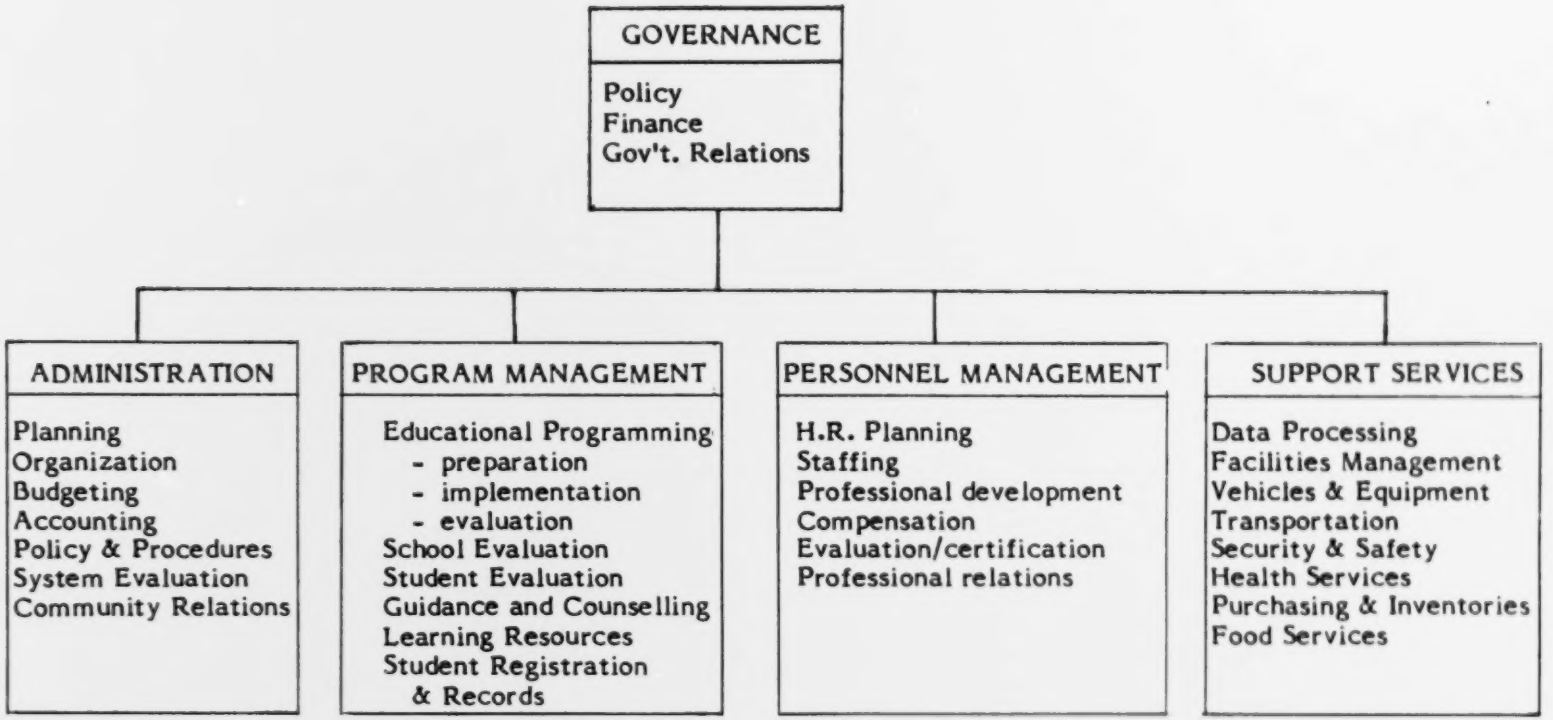
A. WE ANALYZED SYSTEM COMPONENTS

In your terms of reference you identified nine system components that were to be examined in our review:

- System governance.
- System administration.
- Community relations.
- Educational program and delivery.
- Student personnel and services.
- Staff personnel and staff relations.
- Financial management.
- Facilities management.
- Transportation management.

In our initial discussions with you we developed a more detailed list of functions within the above major components. We grouped the functions into the areas of governance, administration, program management, personnel management and support services. The grouping of functions is illustrated in Exhibit IV-1. These functions are those that are conducted at the system level as opposed to functions that are conducted at the program, school, teacher and student level. They represent the functions that should be reviewed during a system evaluation. They include the functions of program, school, teacher and student evaluation as system components. However, evaluations at these other levels would of course involve their own sets of functions and components. For this reason also, the system functions reside primarily in central office. The functions related to other levels of evaluation reside primarily in the schools.

EXHIBIT IV-1
Major system functions



B. WE ADOPTED A VALUE FOR MONEY METHODOLOGY

The key underlying concept that enables us to define a process for conducting a system review is "value for money," where:

- **Value** means the degree to which the system is contributing to educational goals and objectives.
- **Money** means the cost of that contribution in terms of grants and taxes.

In the educational context, the fundamental question is whether current resources are being allocated and utilized optimally so that student achievement is maximized. Posed in this most general form, the question raises many issues of measurement and evaluation methodology. For example student potential is regarded by many as impossible to measure. Nonetheless the concept is sound in principle. One of the aims of the review is to determine the extent to which various measures can and should be used to come as close as possible to the ideal.

Value for money can be translated into:

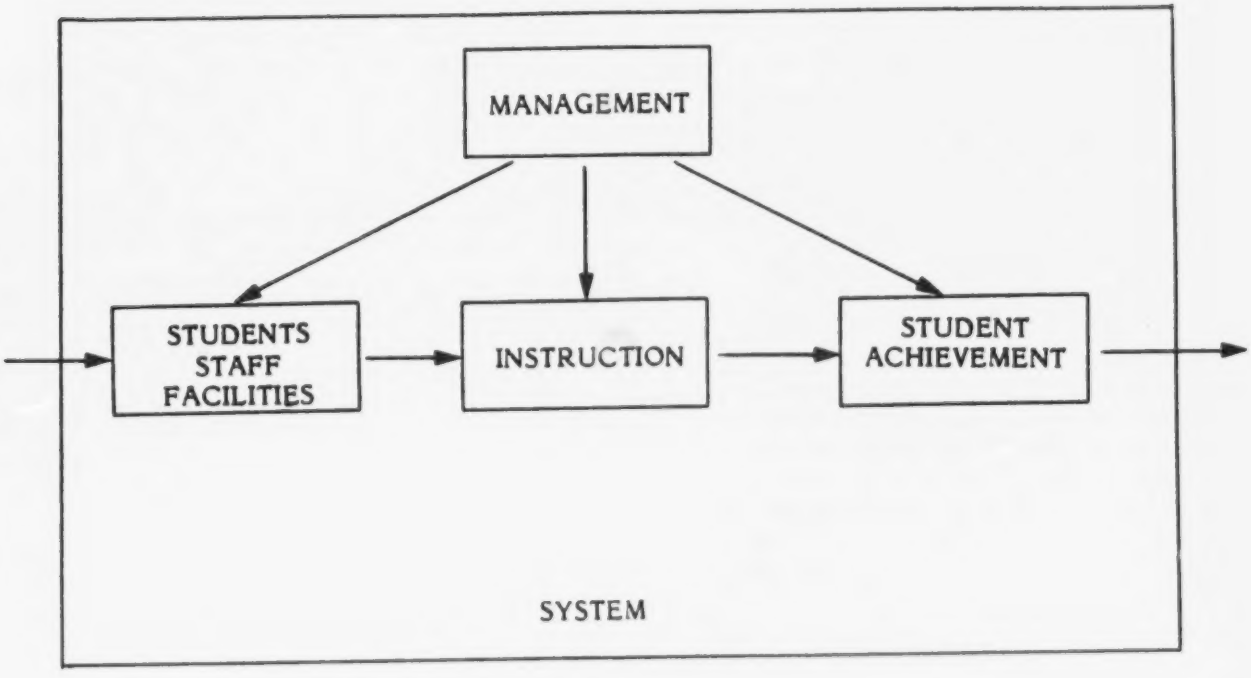
- Effectiveness -- whether programs achieve the goals and objectives of schooling.
- Efficiency -- optimal utilization of resources (staff and facilities) to deliver programs.
- Economy -- cost of acquiring those resources.

Effectiveness is by far the most difficult element to measure. Efficiency and economy are usually relatively easier to measure and assess.

C. WE DEVELOPED PROGRAM LOGIC MODELS

Value for money methodology includes the need to describe programs in terms of the resources they consume and the results they produce that should contribute to system objectives. Programs are described in terms of "logic models." The concept of a logic model, in educational terms, is illustrated in Exhibit IV-2. In the simplest possible terms, the educational system is an entity within a boundary that differentiates what is inside the system and what belongs to the community outside the system. The system receives resources from the community, in terms of staff, facilities and students with potential. The system uses certain processes, that we have labelled "instruction," to convert those raw resources into program outputs. We have categorized the program outputs as student achievement. These outputs are then delivered by the system back into the community.

EXHIBIT IV-2
Fundamental system model



The question of economy relates to whether staff and facilities are required at minimum cost given the standards, skills, and other criteria they must meet. Efficiency relates to the instruction component, the conversion of resources into outputs. Effectiveness is concerned with the extent to which the outputs, i.e., student achievements, meet the requirements of the community as interpreted by the Board. The final component of the system is management which encompasses the Board of Education, the Superintendent and most of the central office activities -- those governance and administration activities that guide the process of acquiring resources, delivering programs and assessing results.

We took this fundamental approach to modelling the system and applied it first to the system functions described in Exhibit IV-1 to develop a more detailed system model and then used the same approach to expand the system model into logic models for each component of the system.

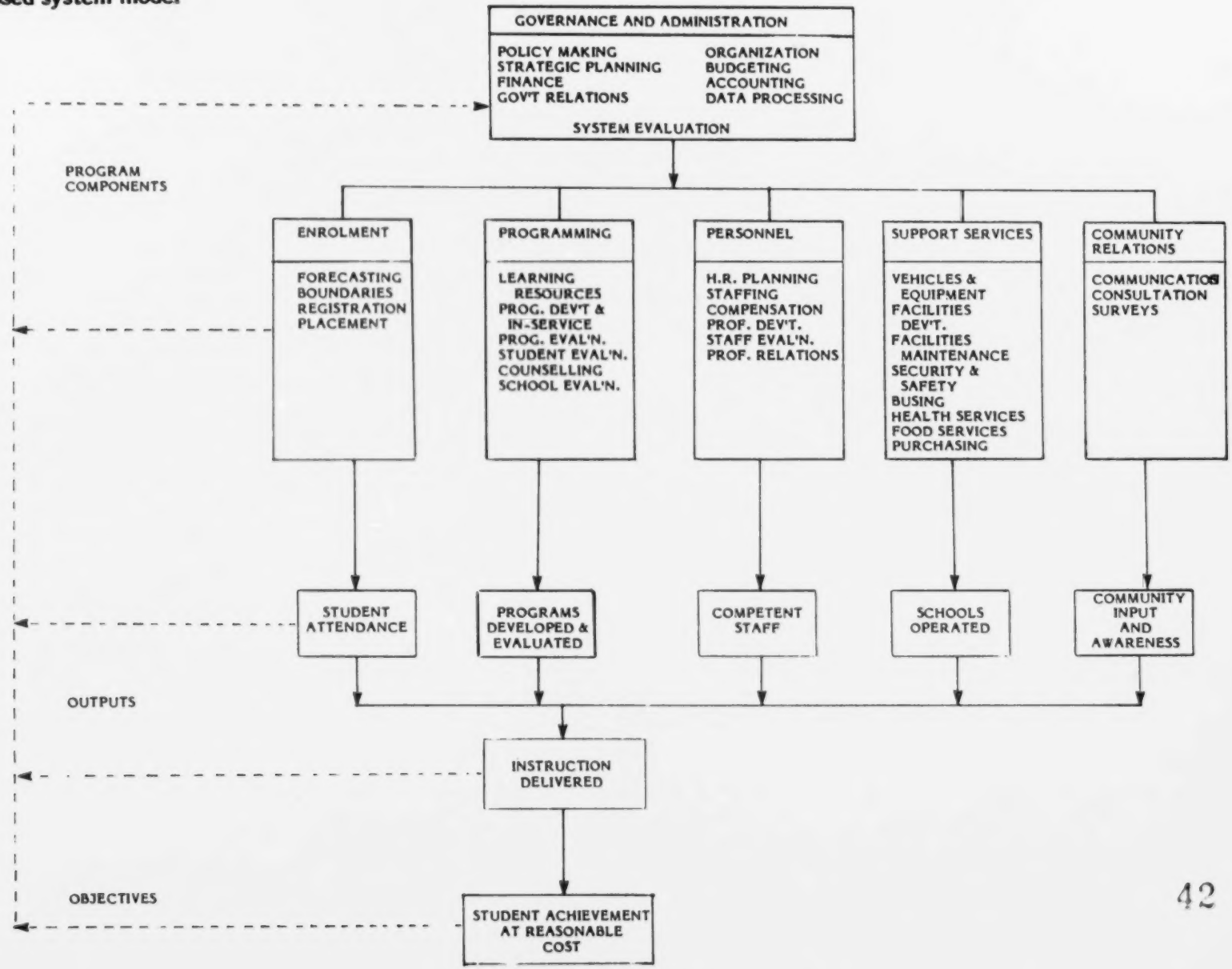
The proposed system model is illustrated in Exhibit IV-3. This model is similar to Exhibit IV-1. Differences result from structuring the model in terms of inputs, processes, outputs and objectives rather than just listing the system functions. We grouped the system functions into six categories that in turn produce six sets of major outputs. The six categories are governance and administration, personnel, programming, support services, enrolment, and community relations. In this overall system model governance and administration do not produce any system outputs per se; this group of functions represents the management role that oversees all other functions and enables them to produce their outputs.

We defined the principal outputs of the system in two levels, the first level consisting of:

- Competent staff, including central office, administrators, teachers, and classified staff.
- Programs that have been developed and evaluated.
- Schools that are built, equipped, and operated.
- Students who attend schools.
- Community input to and awareness of system policies and programs.

These outputs in turn contribute to a higher level output of the system: the delivery of instructional programs to students. And this output in turn is directed toward the achievement of the overall system objective of student achievement at a reasonable cost.

EXHIBIT IV-3
Proposed system model



For each of the components in the above model we developed an individual, more detailed model with the same basic structure: input, process, output, and indicators of whether the objectives have been achieved. These component models are listed in Exhibit IV-4. In totality they represent a detailed model of the education system. A number of features of these models merit discussion at this point.

1. The models are interrelated

In many instances the output of one component represents the input to another component. For example one of the outputs of the policy component is goals and objectives. This output then represents one of the inputs to system evaluation. Another obvious example is that budgets are an output of the budgeting component and an input to the accounting component. Thus at this level of detail the complex interrelationships of the activities of the system are more readily perceived than they are in the more general system models we have described above.

2. Each component can be assessed for value for money

In varying and differing degrees, the questions of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness can be applied to each component. For example personnel compensation, in particular salary determination, is largely an economy question. Data processing would be primarily assessed for efficiency: meeting relevant information needs accurately and on time at minimum cost. School transportation illustrates all three elements: bus acquisition for economy, bus scheduling for efficiency and on-time arrival at schools for effectiveness. In all cases the components can be looked at from the point of view of whether the desired output is obtained to a required standard of quality at a reasonable cost. The performance indicators for each component indicate how that can be measured.

3. Models are the basis for system evaluation criteria

System and system component models provide the framework from which to select suitable components for review. Once these components are selected, then the standards or criteria to be used in the assessment must be completely spelled out. The performance indicators in Exhibit IV-4 give a preliminary indication of the criteria that should be used. However we then went on to develop full-scale criteria for the components that were selected for concentration in this review. These criteria are contained in Appendix A to this report. In addition, we developed criteria for one component that is not included in the models, namely corporate services, because of the importance of the organizational relationships between the County and the Board and their respective administrations.

EXHIBIT IV-4
Proposed component models

SYSTEM COMPONENT	INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION				
POLICY MAKING	Community needs & trends Legislation Government directives & guidelines Administration proposals Other jurisdictions Board member views Evaluations	Policy analysis Community consultation Debate Documentation Approval	Policy statements Goals & objectives Directives & guidelines	Staff know policies Balance between control & flexibility
STRATEGIC PLANNING	Environmental trends Resource expectations	Forecasting Cost/benefit analysis of alternatives	Strategic & operational plans New schools, closures Program decisions and budget frameworks	Population served Adequacy of program coverage
FINANCE	Government directives By-laws Budgetary proposals Political judgment	Impact analysis Forecasting revenue Consultation with government and County	Assessment Grants Debenture funds	Budgeted funds obtained Cost of financing
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS	Government policies Impact of policies on System	Consultation Negotiation	Policy compliance Policy changes Constraints on System	Board and department views
ORGANIZATION	Strategic plans Required tasks, functions, programs	Organizational analysis	Organization structure Roles and responsibilities Delegation	Client surveys Spans of control Clarity of roles Strength of relationships
BUDGETING	Strategic plans School/program/staff/ support plans Workload standards Unit costs Revenue forecast	Costing Negotiation Corporate services costing	Agreed budgets Allocation of resources	Budget categories reflect decision needs

EXHIBIT IV-4 (Cont'd)
Proposed component models

SYSTEM COMPONENT	INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
ACCOUNTING	Budgets Commitments Expenditures	Authorization Recording Analysis	Financial statements Cost data Management reports	Outputs meet information needs for decisions Timeliness and accuracy of reporting
DATA PROCESSING	Information needs Data Resources	Facility acquisition System development System operation	Systems developed Facilities acquired Information reported	Relevant needs met timely & accurately at minimum cost Facility & staff utilization
SYSTEM EVALUATION	Goals and objectives Policies Management reports Evaluations Financial statements Community input Evaluation criteria System performance data	Performance review Consideration of alternatives Audit	Compliance with and/or modifications to goals, objectives plans, programs, budgets Evaluation report Action to improve System	Reports indicate performance Methodology appropriate appropriate
ENROLMENT				
PLANNING	Enrolment trends Demographic forecasts	Analysis	School size, boundaries Allocation to schools	School utilization Travel distance
STUDENT REGISTRATION & RECORDS	Student data Student population distribution Students tests	Data input, processing, reporting	Acceptance in schools Student achievement reports	Timeliness, relevance, accuracy of data Cost of record system

EXHIBIT IV-4 (Cont'd)
Proposed component models

SYSTEM COMPONENT	INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
PROGRAMMING				
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION	Current programs Levels of satisfaction Student test results Mandated curriculum Other school systems	Program evaluation Program modification In-service	Evaluation reports Program revisions Program delivery	Evaluation methodology Program effectiveness and cost
SCHOOL EVALUATION	Evaluation standards School performance	Audit	Evaluation reports Recommendations Achievement of standards	Evaluation methodology
STUDENT EVALUATION	Student achievement Achievement standards	Testing Guidance and Counselling	Test results Individual programs Assignment to special program/schools	Programs match student needs
LEARNING RESOURCES	Program needs Budget	Need definition Acquisition Inventory management Delivery	Schools supplied	Needs specified Alternatives examined Lowest cost acquisition Optimal inventory Needs met
PERSONNEL				
HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING	Enrolments P/T ratio Program needs	Estimating demand Maintain H.R. inventory Forecasting supply Analyzing gap	Human Resource Plans - staffing - training - deployment - reduction	Needs met
STAFFING	Vacancies Turnover H.R. plans H.R. inventories Establishment	Advertising Screening Selection Promotion Deployment Layoff	Positions filled Staff separated	Time to fill positions Calibre of staff hired Vacancy rate P/T ratio Cost of staffing

EXHIBIT IV-4 (Cont'd)
Proposed component models

SYSTEM COMPONENT	INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
COMPENSATION	Current pay Job content Other jurisdiction practice	Job evaluation Salary survey Salary determination Contract administration	Salary scales Individual pay	Internal equity External relativity
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Staff skills Job skill requirements Professional development funds	Determine needs Analyze needs Develop programs Allocate funds Delivery programs	Programs delivered Staff trained	Improved job performance Training cost
EVALUATION/ CERTIFICATION	Employee performance goals Actual performance	Review performance Recommended improvements	Performance report Action to improve performance	Employees know goals & performance
PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS	Current management practices	Communication Negotiation Appeal	Union contract Revised management practices Appeal resolution	Grievances, appeals, strikes Employee opinions
SUPPORT SERVICES				
VEHICLES & EQUIPMENT	Need for service Resources	Requirement planning Acquisition Maintenance Disposal	Vehicles & equipment acquired Vehicles & equipment maintained	Availability & reliability
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT	Need for facility (enrolment) Resources Location, size, condition of current facilities	Planning & approval Construction/acquisition Maintenance	Facilities built Facilities maintained	Size & location of facilities match needs Condition of facilities reasonable Cost
SECURITY & SAFETY	Property	Staff custodial services Monitoring and inspection Investigation of incidents RCMP liaison	Incidents prevented Incidents reported Fines	Accident incidence Property loss/damage

EXHIBIT IV-4 (Cont'd)
Proposed component models

SYSTEM COMPONENT	INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION	Location of schools & residences	Route planning Bus acquisition Driver selection & training Scheduling Operating buses Bus maintenance Driver supervision	Students bused	On time arrival Walking distances Cost Safety
HEALTH SERVICES	Student state of health Health services available	Contracting for service Monitoring service	Students examined Medical problems diagnosed Students treated	Incidence of disease
FOOD SERVICES	Number of students Decision to supply food	Acquisition Preparation Staffing	Students fed	Food quality & quantity Cost
PURCHASING AND INVENTORY MANAGEMENT	Need for supplies Budgets	Requisition Authorization Acquisition Inspection Inventory management Delivery	Supplies acquired and received	Lowest cost acquisition Optimal inventory Delivery lead times Acquisitions meet needs
COMMUNITY RELATIONS				
COMMUNITY RELATIONS	Community views Information needs	Consultation Dissemination of information	Community informed Community involved Views known	Survey of opinions

D. WE DETERMINED THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

Within any given budget for a system review it is not possible to assess every single element of every single program component. Therefore program components to be assessed must be selected on the basis of some selection criteria. The criteria we used to select review projects were:

- Materiality -- the significance of the component in terms of both resources consumed and impact on overall objectives.
- Risk -- that value for money may not be achieved.
- Interest -- of the Board and its various publics.
- Auditworthiness -- the likelihood of improvement opportunities existing (the converse of risk), the likelihood of identifying such an opportunity and the likelihood of action being taken on it.
- Auditability -- the extent to which it is possible to conduct a value for money assessment of the component in terms of establishing reasonable review criteria and of the possibility of making the appropriate measurements.

We applied these criteria to each of the system components and, in discussion with you, jointly agreed on a list of audit projects as displayed in Exhibit IV-5. Exhibit IV-5 shows the 17 audit projects selected on the left-hand side. Each of the columns indicates the areas in which we pursued our investigations with respect to each project. For example we discussed with all school principals the issues of central office organization, school budgeting, community relations, program evaluation, facilities maintenance, and student transportation.

As a result of this selection process we also identified which components were not going to be reviewed. These were:

- Provincial government relations.
- Learning resources.
- Staff compensation.
- Professional relations.
- Student registration.
- Accounting.
- Vehicles and equipment.

EXHIBIT IV-5
Audit projects

AUDIT PROJECTS	AREAS COVERED						
	SCHOOLS	CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION	PUPIL SERVICES	PERSONNEL	PLANNING & OPERATIONS	RESEARCH & DEV'T	CORPORATE
GOVERNANCE							
POLICY MAKING							
STRATEGIC PLANNING		•	•		•		
ACCOUNTABILITY		•	•	•	•		•
ORGANIZATION							
CORPORATE SERVICES				•	•		•
CENTRAL OFFICE	•	•	•		•		
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS	•			•			
ADMINISTRATION							
BUDGETING	•	•	•	•	•		•
COMMUNITY RELATIONS	•				•		
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT							
PROGRAM PLANNING & DEV'T.		•	•		•		
EVALUATION	•	•	•	•			
PERSONNEL							
HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING				•			•
STAFFING		•		•			
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT		•	•	•			
EVALUATION		•		•		•	
SUPPORT SERVICES							
DATA PROCESSING			•	•		•	•
FACILITIES MAINTENANCE	•				•		•
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION	•				•		

- Security and safety.
- Health services.
- Purchasing.
- Food services.

Furthermore, because this review was in response to the requirement for a system evaluation, we did not review in any detail school, teacher, program and student evaluations. However we did make some observations on the school and teacher evaluation processes.

E. WE FOLLOWED AN AUDIT PROCESS

Thus far in this chapter we have been discussing how the framework and scope of the audit were determined. By developing a comprehensive system framework, we have established the first basis for ongoing system reviews. Having selected the projects for this review and established the relevant audit criteria, we then proceeded to collect evidence to determine whether or not the criteria were being satisfied for each of the relevant system components. We reviewed our major findings with you, and then proceeded to prepare this report.

This entire process is fully described in a separate document entitled "System Review Guidelines," that we have prepared in order to provide you with a plan and a set of procedures for regular system reviews.

Within our budgetary constraints it was not always possible to go to extensive depths in our investigations. Subsequent reviews may also extend and elaborate on the work we have done on the system components selected for review.

We collected our evidence in three main ways:

- Surveys.
- Interviews.
- Reviews of documentation.

1. Surveys

We conducted three surveys, one of employees and two of members of the community.

a) Employee survey

All employees were invited to participate in a quality of work life survey. The survey was administered in a series of sessions at schools and central office. A total of 845 staff responded to the survey. The questionnaire that we used and a summary of the results of the survey are attached at Appendix B. The detailed survey reports are available in the Office of the Superintendent.

The fact that the survey instrument that we used was a generic one, not designed specifically for the education sector, caused a number of concerns among employees in the interpretation of such terms as "manager" and "management." This may have caused some bias in the responses to certain questions. However the responses to those questions did not appear to give rise to any issues on which we would want to comment.

b) Community survey

We conducted a telephone survey of randomly-selected members of the community served by the Board of Education. A total of 385 people responded to the survey. Two-thirds have children attending school in the County and slightly more than one-half have children attending school in the public system. In addition to obtaining general views on the quality of education in the County, the survey addressed specific issues such as the allocation of resources, the adequacy of information, and whether students and teachers were properly evaluated.

The survey questionnaire and a summary of the results are attached at Appendix C.

c) Focus groups

We conducted three focus groups with community representatives selected at random by the administration from parents of public school system children. An average of 16 individuals attended each session, which lasted in excess of two hours. Similar issues to those addressed in the community survey were discussed in the focus groups. Appendix D summarizes the findings of these focus groups.

We also solicited independent input from the community through two vehicles prepared by the administration:

- A pamphlet entitled "The Strathcona County System Review" that was circulated to members of the school system and municipal government as well as to the public at large.

- An article in the March 1986 issue of "Strathcona County Schools" asking for public comments for input to the review.

Response from these invitations was very limited. Five letters were received from members of the public, all dealing with specific programming issues that were beyond the scope of this review. However the more proactive solicitation of responses through the focus groups and community survey were successful in obtaining a broad range of input into the review.

2. Interviews

In addition to extensive discussions with members of the Steering Committee and the superintendency team, we interviewed the Chairman of the Board, and a total of 13 other central office staff, some of them several times, and held group discussions with all 29 school principals. These interviews focussed initially on the roles and responsibilities of the individuals and their participation in the various program components, then eventually more and more specifically on particular issues as these came to light in the course of our review.

3. Documentation

We examined and reviewed a wide variety of documented materials such as:

- The 1986 Board of Education Budget.
- The Operational Handbook for Schools.
- Various draft policy documents, particularly those related to evaluations.
- The Clover Bar Junior High School Evaluation Report.
- The 1981 Report on the Organization and Operation of the County of Strathcona by R.C. Bryce.
- The County of Strathcona 1985 Financial Statements.
- Documents on the Alberta Management and Finance Plan and provincial evaluation policies.
- The Central Office Budget Manual and the Budget Manual for Schools.
- The 1986 Corporate Cost Allocation Review.

V

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

This chapter synthesizes some of the more important findings detailed in subsequent chapters. To some extent our comments refer to issues that are probably common to most educational systems rather than specific to Strathcona.

A. ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS ARE OVERLOADING THE SYSTEM

A recurrent theme throughout our investigations was that the system is trying to do too much with insufficient resources. This is evidenced by:

- School administrators spending far more than the allowed "admin time" on administrative activities responding to central office initiatives, attending meetings to discuss policy issues, reviewing proposed procedure revisions, etc.
- Indications from the employee survey that a major concern, particular with central office staff, is excessive workload and related job stress.
- Many new initiatives being launched, partly but not entirely as a result of the Management and Finance Plan and other departmental changes, but also within the system to engage in thorough reviews of other policy areas. The system review itself belongs in this category.
- Comments from many people in the system that "We are losing sight of what is best for the kids."
- The time and resources being devoted to the new forms of school, program, and teacher evaluation.
- Frequent comments from school administrators that central office is "not visible" in the schools.

B. THE MANAGEMENT TASK IS SUPERHUMAN

The current spans of control both at central office and in the schools make "management" in any conventional sense impractical. Thirty-five positions report to the superintendent: six at central office and 29 principals. In the

schools there are up to 20 teachers per administrator yet administrators carry teaching loads as well as supervisory responsibilities. Given the complexities of the tasks to be supervised and the intricate interrelationships between staff at one level that report to another level, a workable span of control at central office would be of the order of five or six positions.

The situation is clearly compounded by the factors listed above contributing to excessive workload.

C. PROFESSIONALS NEED TO BE MANAGED

The present organizational structure works only because of the concept of professional independence: of principals in relation to the Superintendent and of teachers in relation to principals. And indeed many of the people we talked to argued that, in an professional environment, supervision, and indeed evaluation, are unnecessary because the professional should be responsible for maintaining his or her own professional standards.

While clearly teachers and principals are professionals whose conduct is governed by a code of ethics and a set of accepted standards, this does not mean that the management role of principals, the superintendent and the Board can be abrogated. Education professionals do not have mechanisms in place like some other professions that provide automatic checks and balances. There are no fees for service from clients. Clients do not have much choice of whether or not to avail themselves of the service and from which source.

Teachers are public servants as well as professionals and are therefore accountable, through the Superintendent and the Board, to the taxpayers. A management structure and philosophy is required to support that accountability. Management at all levels, i.e., the Board, the Superintendent, and school administrators have the role of setting educational goals, measuring achievement against those goals (evaluation) and ensuring that the goals are achieved within available resources.

D. ACCOUNTABILITY IS THE CRUCIAL ISSUE

A number of factors in the system or even in the culture mitigate against accountability to meeting student and community needs, such as:

- The tendency to adopt self-evaluation mechanisms where possible.
- Conflict of interest in the teacher roles of both instructing and evaluating students; and conflict of interest in the central office roles of both developing and evaluating programs (acting as both advocate and judge).

- The lack of direct accountability to "clients," as discussed above, because parents do not directly pay a fee to the professional delivering the services to their children and do not have, for all intents and purposes, any choice as to where to send their children for education.

- The unwillingness of parents, despite their expressed concerns, to participate in the political representation process through the Board of Education.

What "saves" the system is, again, the professionalism of the teaching staff. But while their motivation may be of a high standard, the system does not always support that motivation. Rather it can introduce both disincentives and counter-productive incentives that cannot but help to reduce or divert to some degree the best intentions of any teacher.

A key accountability document is the annual budget which can indicate to Board members how resources are being allocated to and spent on the multiplicity of educational objectives and priorities. The present document can be significantly improved if it is viewed in this light.

E. THE BOARD MUST CHOOSE AMONG STRATEGIC OPTIONS

In the light of the above general comments we believe that there are four principal strategies, some combination of which should be pursued to enable the system to function more effectively. The rationale for these strategies is discussed in detail in subsequent chapters. They are:

- Change the organization structure to permit a more active management role at each level.

- Improve the evaluation processes, particularly for teachers but also for schools and programs, so that the accountability relationships are strengthened.

- Cause greater public, particularly parent, involvement at the Board level but more importantly at the school level.

- Improve accountability information to the Board.

Each of these strategies would be aimed at increasing the accountability of the system to meeting the needs of the students and thereby of the community that it serves. For it seems to us that it is ultimately in the area of accountability that the greatest improvement in the system can be achieved.

VI

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

In this chapter we review four of the audit projects: policy making, strategic planning, budgeting, and community relations.

A. POLICIES AND GOALS ARE WELL STATED

1. Background

Policy making is a critical Board function that guides and directs all system activities. It is essential for the Board to have full information on the needs and wishes of the community, on the needs of students, schools, and departments and on the resource implications of policy options. Once adopted, policies should be communicated clearly to all affected and should be monitored to assess their compliance and effectiveness.

This is a particularly difficult area to audit because policy making is clearly a matter of consultation, negotiation, and judgement.

2. Observations

We found that policies were very well documented. A substantial effort has been underway and is continuing to review and update many policies. Many new policy initiatives have been made in such areas as evaluation, discipline, and second-language transportation. Others are in the process of being initiated.

The goals of schooling and education are stated in terms of desired results. The challenge, however, is to develop criteria for assessing the degree to which these results have been attained. The initiatives to introduce evaluation processes are directed at this aim.

However the goals and objectives of the Board are not stated in a similar fashion. The policy states that a program's goals and objectives will be met when the program is staffed with competent teachers, when sufficient materials are available, and when the staff are satisfied with the quality of the program. These objectives are not stated in terms of desired outcomes such as developing competency, acquiring basic knowledge, and developing learning skills.

As you will see in the section under community relations below, we perceive a greater desire among parents to participate in policy deliberations

than is apparent from their attendance at Board meetings. The Board has made considerable efforts to encourage participation without evident success. Parents say that they feel intimidated at meetings and that the political process does not provide adequate means for representation of their views. We stress here that we are not commenting in any way on how trustees carry out their role. Perhaps many of the parents' concerns could be better dealt with at the school level rather than the Board level. This relates to our next point about principal participation in policy making.

While principals are consulted and asked to comment on policy issues and on drafts of policy documents, they nevertheless feel that their views are not sufficiently taken into account. They feel that their views should be heeded more, in particular on issues that impact them primarily such as the French immersion program, second-language transportation, discipline and student evaluation. Rather than asking them to comment on drafts prepared at central office and then re-edited at central office for submission to the Board, perhaps principals could be asked to prepare the initial draft for policies in appropriate areas such as those mentioned above. If this suggestion were adopted, then it should be incumbent on principals to consult parents, where appropriate through whatever vehicles they have for securing parent participation in school activities.

3. Recommendations

- Establish in the policy on Board goals and objectives an output oriented format for program objectives.
- Involve principals more in policy preparation.

B. PLANNING PROCESSES ARE IN PLACE OR BEING DEVELOPED

1. Background

Strategic planning in an organization such as the school system is extremely important because the principal resources of the system (staff and schools) require long-range investments. Buildings last for many years. Staff have tenured positions. Therefore most of the costs of the system are largely determined by long-range staffing and facility decisions. These decisions then impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. The number, size, location and technology of the schools determine the access of students to education. The number, skills, and qualifications of staff determine the quality of education.

The system is facing significant changes in its environment. The demands on the system are largely generated by the community and by government; the system does not control these demands to any significant

degree. In the recent history of the system and for the foreseeable future a major feature has been and will be declining enrolment and the consequent decline in the SFPF. In the last three years enrolment has dropped by 10% and elementary enrolment is down by 30%. You are projecting a significant reduction in enrolment over the next five years.

2. Observations

While you do not have a formal strategic planning process in place, we found that the major elements of strategic planning were well conducted. As is apparent from our earlier comments you have a good process for tracking and forecasting enrolment. Not only current enrolments but also birth rates and in- and out-migration to and from the County are taken into account in forecasting future enrolments. These are converted into individual school enrolment expectations and then into staffing requirements to become the basis for human resource planning. Human resource planning in turn, as we indicate in a later section, is also well conducted.

Facility requirements are also assessed annually in relation to enrolment, but you recognize that you need a full-scale five-year facilities plan and capital budget. We reviewed the planning of one facility in detail: the Ardrossan Junior/Senior High School project. We found that this facility improvement project was well planned and controlled. The requisite analyses, definition of the need, evaluation of options, and capital cost estimating and approval processes were all well executed.

Operational plans are less well defined. A three-year plan was adopted for 1984/85 to 1986/87. This indicates some general objectives for each central office department. But departmental plans are not yet integrated with school and program plans into system-wide plans that are related both to the strategic plan and the human and financial resources available. Departments prepare their own annual plans in varying degrees of detail. But these are not rolled up into an annual central office plan that ties in with the allocation of resources. You are reviewing this process with a view to making the plans more concrete and results-oriented.

Last year you conducted a strategic planning session, a SWOT analysis to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the system. This process included participation of the school principals. The outcome was the identification of a number of areas that merited attention. However most of these were related to organizational, professional, and support service issues rather than to strategic directions.

3. Recommendations

- Proceed with your intention to develop a long-range facility plan and capital budget.

- Integrate departmental annual plans into a central office operational plan.

C. IMPROVE BUDGET, COST AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING TO THE BOARD

1. Background

The budget is a key accountability document as well as the form in which resources are requested and approved. The Board can exercise its mandate effectively only if it receives information on system performance in relation to goals and plans. This applies equally to resources planned and consumed as to program results intended and achieved. And because, as we have already commented, incentives to be efficient and effective in the system are few, those vehicles, such as the budget, that provide a means for assessing efficiency and effectiveness should be used to their fullest potential.

Your budgeting and financial reporting systems are undergoing fundamental changes. The principal change will place a significant burden on Finance staff. This is the provincial requirement to change from a calendar fiscal year to a school fiscal year. In addition you would like as soon as practicable to move towards some form of program budgeting.

2. Observations

The budget format could be improved significantly by isolating and reporting concisely key costs and performance indicators.

The current two-volume budget submission contains a tremendous amount of detail that tends to obscure significant items. For example, excluding corporate services, 90% of the expenditures are on personnel. Most of these expenditures are shown in one line out of 16 pages in the Executive Summary. Similarly the total cost of such programs as elementary education, second languages, or guidance and counselling are not presented. In particular it is not possible to determine from the budget document the total expenditure in any one particular school nor, therefore, to relate that to the number of students in the school.

To some extent these items are not being presented because of the reluctance to adopt school-based budgeting. Principals, except for high schools, would prefer not to be responsible for the total school budget. Given the pupil/teacher ratio, the mix of programs has the greatest influence on the number of teachers in a school. And the number of teachers is the principal determinant of the majority of school costs. Nevertheless, if you decide not to decentralize budget responsibilities to the extent of having school-based budgeting, this should not prevent you from presenting total cost by school in the budget document.

Decentralization of budgeting can also be carried out on a partial basis. For example, secretarial time could be decentralized so that principals would have the option of re-allocating resources between secretarial time and copying equipment.

With respect to program budgets, ideally you should present the total cost of each program both in the Executive Summary and in the detail program presentations in the main budget document. However, as an interim step you could adopt the format of the County School Funds Report in the County Financial Statement using the main headings in form 43 B, page SF2 of that document. This format identifies "function programs": ECS, elementary, junior high, senior high, special education and community services. The advantage of adopting this format is that historical data are available and can be presented for prior years. Subsequently you would show individual programs in these main function programs. We also believe that you should immediately indicate, within the function programs, the total cost by school.

The budget documents contain very little in the way of performance information. They do indicate revenue and cost trends, pupil/teacher ratios, and expenditure per pupil for the system as a whole. They also compare salary settlements with the Edmonton Consumer Price Index. Much more needs to be added, where feasible, in the form of relating costs to student achievement, the fundamental performance criterion of the system. (Cost per student is a measure of efficiency; cost per student outcome is a measure of cost effectiveness.) For example eventually you could report in the budget historical trends for:

- Grade 12 diplomas (by school).
- Provincial examination results for grades 3, 6, and 9 by school and compared to the provincial average.
- The cost per student graduating, and the cost per student meeting set standards on provincial tests.
- The cost per student by function program and by program.

You should also report historical measures of activity and utilization such as:

- Hours of instruction per student by program.
- Hours of instruction per teacher.
- Square feet per student per school.
- Pupil/teacher ratios by school and program.

This kind of information is central to one of the Board's main responsibilities: making program resource allocation decisions.

We examined the current procedures for allocating corporate services costs. Apart from the allocation of the costs of the main building, we did not find any serious discrepancies. The advantages of a more detailed allocation and breakdown of corporate services expenditures would likely be outweighed by the additional cost of maintaining the information. It must however be made clear that inequitable distribution of costs between Fort and County taxpayers is caused by swings in the equalized assessment, not by the cross-charging of corporate services costs between the municipality and the Board.

It seems to us that, because departments such as Finance are in the municipal organization, the Board and the administration may not be availing themselves fully of the expertise of such departments. With respect to Finance this relates to budgeting processes, borrowing options, and reporting mechanisms. We address this issue in Chapter VII.

3. Recommendations

- Consider school-based budgeting, perhaps on a partial or selective basis initially.
- Present total program and school costs in the budget, adopting the County Schools Funds Report format as an interim step.
- Include more performance information and related costs in the budget.

D. CONTINUE STRIVING FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS

1. Background

The ultimate purpose of the Board of Education is to serve community needs. Therefore information on community attitudes and concerns is an essential input to both Board and school planning. And proper explanation of Board and school policies and decisions can prevent misinterpretation and dissatisfaction, as well as serve the basic need of community members to know what is going on in the system.

As we have already mentioned, the Board has encouraged public attendance at Board meetings in a variety of ways but attendance is sparse. Good efforts have been made to obtain input on a program basis, for example on the issues of second language, and transportation. However you recognize the need for a more formal program for obtaining inputs on facility planning.

Schools have various ways of communicating with parents such as newsletters, parent teacher associations, soliciting participation in school activities, etc. Current policy statements encourage such efforts but do not set minimum standards for community involvement at the school level.

2. Observations

One of the most stated concerns of residents that we surveyed was lack of information on school activities. Two out of five parents of children in the public system said they did not receive enough information. This proportion increased to 64% for non-parents. In the focus groups there was a strongly-expressed desire for the system to be more responsive to parents. A community-wide forum for parents to express their views was suggested, despite the fact that we pointed out that this was one of the roles of the trustees and the Board. The answer was that the Board was not responsive to parents' concerns. We suspect, however, that many of these concerns relate to and can be dealt with at the school level rather that the Board level.

In Chapter V we stress the importance of accountability of the system to the community. This community includes non-parent taxpayers as well as parents. While we find it difficult to make suggestions that could improve the Board's attempts to obtain input at the Board level, clearly every possible avenue should be explored and pursued. On the other hand, at the school level we believe that the Board should establish a policy on minimum mechanisms for obtaining community input and disseminating information. We suggest that each school be required to establish a parent teacher association that would meet regularly, perhaps at least quarterly. Board representatives, typically the trustee for the area, should at least attend the meetings, or perhaps could be ex-officio members of the parent council. Principals should be required to present a report on a progress basis each quarter and a fuller annual report once a year. These reports should be as far as possible "performance" related -- in terms of student achievement (athletic and social as well as academic) and progress on particular issues affecting the schools such as facility improvements, transportation, program offerings, and so forth.

Such associations might not only take some of the heat off the Board but would also provide an increased sense of accountability of school administrators and teachers to the parents of their clients.

3. Recommendations

- Continue striving to improve Board level inputs from the community.
- Establish a policy for parent relations and reporting at the school level.

VII

ORGANIZATION

In the chapter we report on the audit projects dealing with corporate services relationships central office organization, and organizational effectiveness.

A. FORMALIZE CORPORATE SERVICES RELATIONSHIPS

1. Background

The avoidance of duplication of functions and the resulting economies of scale is the principal rationale for the corporate services concept within the County structure. The concept of a corporate services group is however independent of the relationship of the Board to Council with respect to borrowing money, approving bylaws, and approving the budget.

The corporate services philosophy was adopted in 1983 following a 1981 study by Dr. R.C. Bryce. That report recommended an Associate Commissioner, Corporate Services who would be responsible for the functions of finance, data processing, facilities and maintenance, purchasing, transportation, personnel and printing. The Associate Commissioner had to report to the Chief Commissioner with a dotted line responsibility to the then Deputy Superintendent of Education. The Associate Commissioner of Corporate Services would also be County Treasurer.

Subsequent changes in senior staff including the vacancy of the Associate Commissioner position have resulted in re-alignment of some of these functions. The current situation is that Personnel reports directly to the Superintendent and Facilities and Transportation report to the Superintendent through the Assistant Superintendent, Planning and Operations. Finance, (which includes Purchasing) and Data Processing, Vehicles and Equipment, and Communications report through the Associate Commissioner, Corporate Services (vacant) to the Commissioner.

2. Observations

Most people we interviewed said that, compared to the situation two years ago, the level of service from these central groups has improved significantly. This was particularly true of facilities maintenance which had been a sore issue with school administrators. This improvement, from the point of view of schools, is likely attributable to the movement of Facilities department from the municipality to the education central office, and the appointment of an ex-school principal to supervise that function.

Overall relationships between the municipality and the central office also seem to have improved significantly. This is likely attributable to changes in senior staff.

While each group is serving both the educational and the municipal system, there is an obvious tendency to serve better the system to which the group reports. Generally speaking those services that are located within the municipality are viewed by educational staff as being less responsive than those located within the central office.

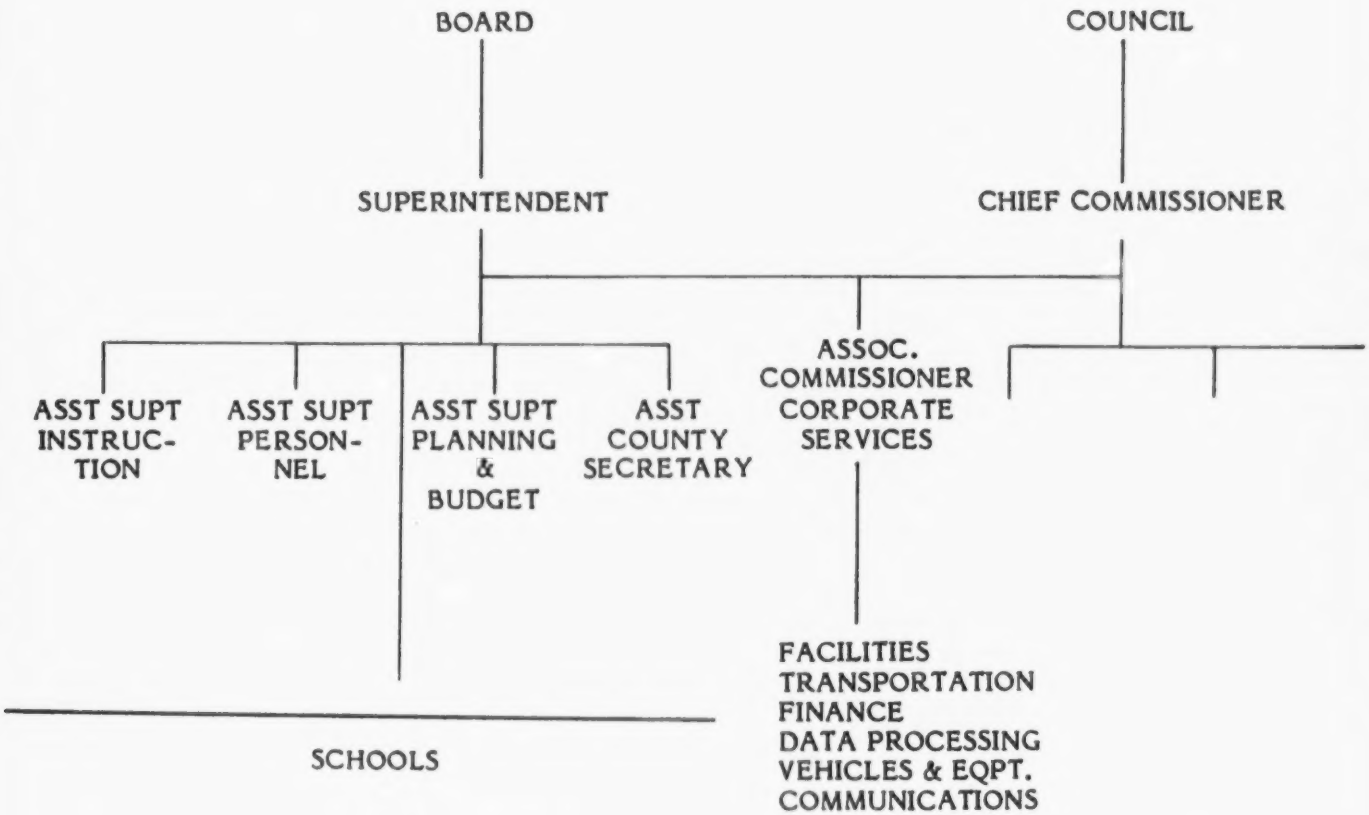
While it is true that any organization will only work well if the members act in a spirit of cooperation, it is also true that the best structures maximize the likelihood of cooperation between groups and minimize conflicts. Clearly there are potential inherent conflicts in the corporate services concept. On the other hand the concept also clearly avoid duplication of functions and has the potential to be much more efficient than if the municipality and the central office provided all their own central services.

Ideally, given adequate resources, we believe you should decentralize corporate services. We agree that the corporate services concept results in less duplication and is therefore likely more efficient. However many costs are hidden, such as time spent resolving issues through negotiation that would otherwise be settled by management decision. On the other hand, it is clearly less effective, particularly with respect to those function that are closely related to management responsibilities.

If you continue with the corporate services concept we suggest some changes to make it more effective. Two of the centralized functions could be decentralized to the municipality and the central office respectively, because of their critical importance from a line management point of view. these are budgeting and personnel. We suggest that the Assistant Superintendent, Planning and Operations be responsible for budget preparation. Financial accounting would continue to be provided centrally. We also suggest that education personnel management, particularly for professional staff, be the sole responsibility of the Assistant Superintendent, Personnel, An equivalent positon would therefore be required in the municipal structure. However classified staff employee relations could remain centralized.

We further suggest that all other corporate services functions, including Facilities and Transportation, as well as Finance, Data Processing, Vehicles and Equipment and Communications could be centralized further under an Associate Commissioner who reports to both the Chief Commissioner and the Superintendent, not solely to the Chief Commissioner with a dotted line to the Superintendent as at present. Thus there would be a central corporate service group that was literally perceived as central, i.e., located between the two major organizations, and equally accountable to both, Exhibit VII-1 illustrates this organizational form.

EXHIBIT VII-1
Proposed corporate services relationships



This concept of clear, full centralization would be significantly facilitated if corporate services were physically located in a separate part of the Administration building, rather than being distributed among the floors occupied by the central office and municipal staff.

We caution that we make these recommendations solely from the point of view of the education central office. We have not considered the implications for municipal operations, which were beyond our mandate. Therefore these recommendations should be considered in that light and should only be implemented, suitably amended if necessary, after consideration of that impact.

3. Recommendations

- Decentralize most of the personnel function and the budgeting function to the municipality and the education central office.
- Centralize fully all other corporate services under an Associate Commissioner reporting equally to the Superintendent and the Chief Commissioner.
- Locate corporate services in physically separate parts of the Administration building (like Personnel is now).

B. REORGANIZE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

1. Background

As we noted in Chapter III, the central office is organized into five departments, two of which also provide services to the municipality. Two other departments are concerned with educational programming: Curriculum and Instruction, and Pupil Services.

Curriculum and Instruction is responsible for curriculum development and support, in-service training, teacher certification, program, school and student evaluations, and provision of learning resources. Pupil Services is responsible for guidance and counselling, development and implementation of special education programs, behaviour management, and student assessment. The philosophy of these two departments is different: Curriculum and Instruction look across the system on a program basis, Pupil Services focuses on individual needs.

We also noted in Chapter III that a total of 35 positions report to the Superintendent.

2. Observations

The difference in philosophy between the two education program departments has resulted in some overlaps and inconsistencies. For example Curriculum and Instruction's corrective reading program addresses the same needs in some instances as Pupil Services' learning assistance program. While we observed that the relationship between the two departments has improved owing to strong efforts to achieve coordination at the working level, the current structure is liable to perpetuate philosophical differences that are not desirable from an overall system point of view.

When questioned about central office, principals overwhelmingly said that central office staff spend insufficient time in the schools and that it is very difficult to contact central office staff because of their wide range of responsibilities and all the initiative currently underway. The most frequently heard comment was "They're always in meetings." This implies that the organization is creating a considerable need for inter-departmental and inter-group coordination. This perception is also confirmed in the employee survey by the concern of central office staff about inter-group coordination and communications.

We considered a number of options whereby central office could be restructured to improve coordination and communications. These were:

- Regionalization.
- Rotating Assistant Superintendents.
- Assigning schools to directors.

Regionalization, i.e., grouping responsibility for schools by geographical area, is the common organizational form for large educational systems. Each principal would report to an assistant area superintendent, rather than to the Superintendent. This option clearly reduces the span of control and makes the management relationship with principals more workable. However, in a system the size of Strathcona, it would severely reduce the opportunities for specialization of central office staff. It would clearly not be possible to have program supervisors or guidance and counselling supervisors in each area without a large and likely untenable increase in staff.

You have already been considering the possibility of assigning schools to the existing assistant superintendents without changing the central office structure. Each of the four assistant superintendents could be responsible for seven or eight schools. And this responsibility could be rotated once every year or two so that each assistant superintendent eventually got to know all the schools. Principals are generally not in favour of this suggestion because they feel that they would still need to contact and work with other assistant superintendents on a program or functional basis. More seriously however it is

unlikely that the assistant superintendents, with their current workloads, could devote sufficient additional time to the schools to make this arrangement worthwhile.

In our view you need a structure for educational programming that, as far as possible, allows:

- Each school principal to have a main contact point at central office that is not at the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent level.
- Provides for the continuing specialization of program staff and indeed for additional coverage in areas not fully represented at present, such as math.
- Ensures that all educational programming functions are appropriately coordinated.

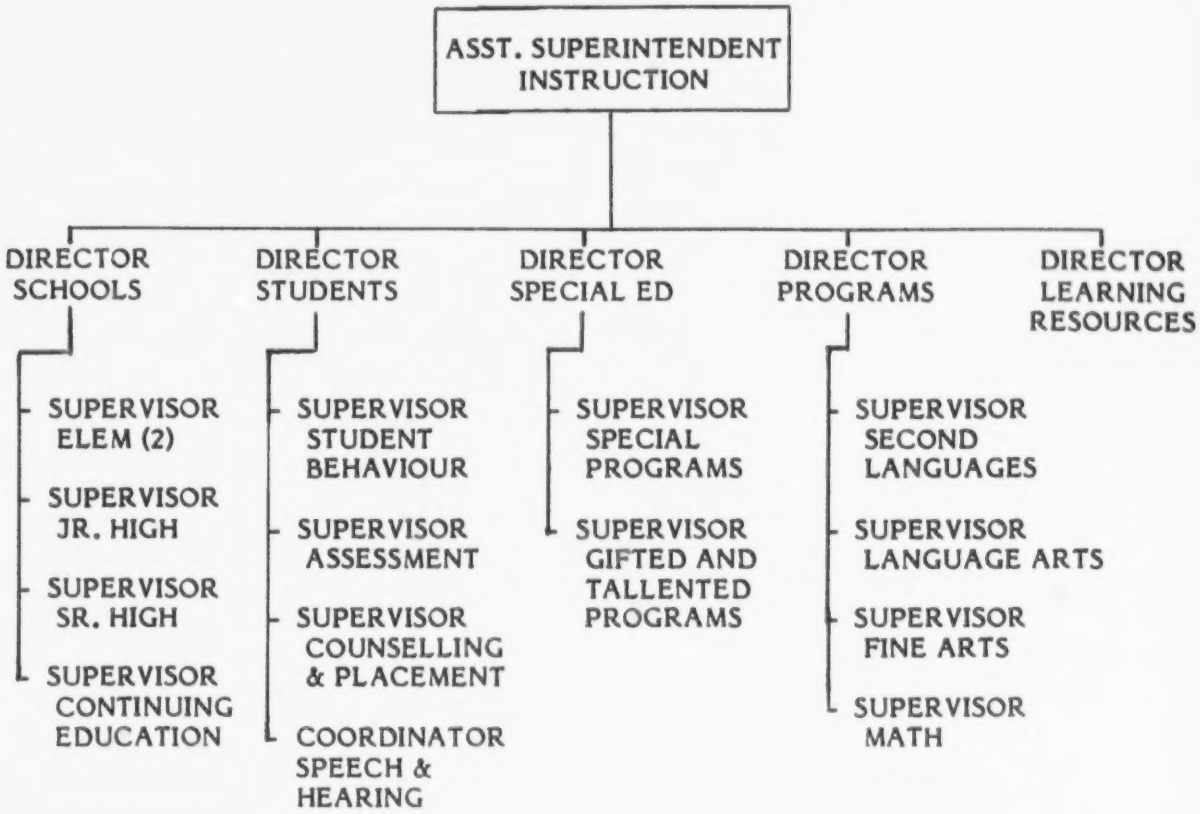
We propose an organization as illustrated in Exhibit VII-2 to satisfy these requirements. We propose that you merge the Curriculum and Instruction and the Pupil Services departments under one assistant superintendent. Reporting to that assistant superintendent would be four or five directors. Each director would have a different focus: schools, students, regular and special programs, and learning resources.

The Director, Schools would have four supervisors, two for elementary schools and one each for junior high and senior high. These supervisors would spend the bulk of their time in the schools. Their essential role would be to provide a focal point for the school principals for all central office services. Each would visit on a regular basis every school for which they are responsible. They would also be the principals' advocate at central office to ensure that central office services were provided in a timely and appropriate fashion. The Director, Schools and his staff would be responsible for school and teacher evaluation and certification.

The Director, Students would have three supervisors responsible for student behaviour, assessment, and counselling and placement. These are the only activities that are oriented specifically towards individual students. Other pupil services functions such as learning assistance are program-oriented just like the curriculum and instruction programs. The Director, Students and his staff would also be responsible for the core testing program and student evaluation.

Program development and support could be organized into one or two groups. If you had two groups, one could be for the regular or core programs: language arts, second languages, fine arts, and math; and one for special education programs. Each group would be headed by a director. Both groups would be responsible for program development, in-service related to programs,

EXHIBIT VII-2
Proposed form of organization of educational programming
(Actual positions are flexible depending on workload)



ROLES	CERTIFICATION SCHOOL EVALUATION TEACHER EVALUATION	STUDENT EVALUATION CORE TESTING	PROGRAM DEV'T INSERVICE	CURRICULUM DEV'T INSERVICE

and program evaluation. The actual number of supervisors would vary according to which programs were being emphasized currently.

The responsibilities of the Director, Learning Resources would remain unchanged.

Until recently there was a Deputy Superintendent role that was also responsible for planning and operations. When the Deputy Superintendent retired, the position was not filled. However the position of Assistant Superintendent, Planning and Operations was created. This left the problem of who should act for the Superintendent in his absence. You opted to rotate the role of Deputy Superintendent among the Assistant Superintendents. We believe you should continue this practice.

3. Recommendations

- Merge the Curriculum and Instruction and Pupil Services Departments into a single Department of Instruction.
- Appoint five directors responsible respectively for schools, students, special education, core programs, and learning resources.
- Ensure within each director's group that adequate specialization as well as much increased contact and liaison with schools is provided.

C. ACT ON EXPRESSED EMPLOYEE CONCERNS

1. Background

We have stressed throughout this report that human resources, particularly professional resources, are the system's most important asset. And clearly the morale, attitudes and commitment of school administrators and teachers heavily influence their performance.

Consequently you asked us to conduct and employee attitude survey, which we did.

2. Observations

The detailed results of the survey are attached at Appendix B. Here we summarize the main findings.

Both in the survey and in all our interviews with staff at the school level, there were lots of concerns expressed, but universally people stressed at

the end of making their concerns known that they considered the system fundamentally very good. This included several comments from staff who had worked in other systems and thought that the Strathcona system was better. Thus we have concluded that there is a high degree of commitment to and satisfaction with the system in general. From the employee survey the scores on such dimensions as loyalty, job satisfaction, and job interest among teachers and school administrators are considerably higher than available norms.

The primary concerns seem to centre around the physical work environment and job stress in both schools and the central office and around inter-group coordination in central office, which is clearly related to coordination issues we discuss in the previous section. Physical working environment problems, which include such factors as ventilation, temperature, noise, cleanliness and work space, can often be solved reasonably quickly and inexpensively. Such changes can demonstrate that staff concerns are being addressed.

The role of central office bears comment in the context of organizational effectiveness. Central office is to a large degree facilitative of school delivery of educational programs. How the relationship with schools is perceived and managed can impact significantly on administrative and teacher performance. We believe that our recommendations for the organization of central office will help you achieve the optimum relationship.

The Principals' Association provides a vehicle for principals to discuss system-wide issues and make recommendations to the Superintendent and the Board. However principals feel that the Association meetings are to some extent dominated by central office staff. Also the Principals' Association is a large group. We suggest that principals should meet more frequently by sector on a collegial basis. Many issues tend to be sector-specific. And if you adopt our central office organization recommendations, the appropriate supervisor can be invited to these meetings.

3. Recommendations

- Act expeditiously on employee concerns evidenced by the survey.
- Encourage principals to meet more often on a sectoral basis.

VIII

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

We have dealt with many program management issues under other headings. In this chapter we are concerned with program planning and evaluation.

A. IMPROVE COORDINATION OF PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Background

The provincial Program of Studies prescribes the bulk of the curriculum to be followed, especially in those areas that are the responsibility of Curriculum and Instruction Department. Consequently the opportunities for curriculum enhancement are relatively limited. Test results, consultation with principals, advice of the program specialist, and program evaluations are used to judge whether programs need enhancement. Special education programs have more flexibility and resources. Needs assessments are conducted. Parents, teachers and staff are surveyed. Program evaluations are used to modify existing programs.

In-service is a significant component of program planning and development. Funding is designated by the Department of Education for specific in-service activities.

2. Observations

Given the limited requirement for and resources devoted to development of programs in the core subjects, this area appears to be well planned and controlled. Problems that have arisen appear to be more organization related than program related. We have already noted the overlap between the corrective reading and learning assistance programs. Similarly the basic core program is being operated by Pupil Services but fits better with the responsibilities of Curriculum Development. This lack of coordination of program development has caused confusion at the school level.

In-service overlaps and lack of coordination have been a sore issue. In-service resources are tied to particular programs which are the responsibility of individual central office staff. Each person takes seriously his or her responsibility to ensure the in-service program is delivered. Central office staff are in fact encouraged to emphasize in-service activity through the monthly absentee report which requires them to identify the number of in-service days

conducted. Consequently school teachers are bombarded by in-service requests. Schedule conflicts have been a particular problem. You have been addressing the problem and indications are that the new in-service committee and the preparation of a master calendar will ameliorate it. However, the preparation of annual operational plans, as recommended in Chapter VII should result in resolution of the entire issue.

3. Recommendations

- Resolve program coordination problems through organizational changes (see Chapter VII).
- Plan and coordinate in-service activities on a system-wide basis.

B. REVIEW THE SCHOOL EVALUATION PROCESS

1. Background

Evaluations at all levels: system, school, program, teacher, and student, are mandated by and are a key feature of the provincial Management and Finance Plan. All school jurisdictions are required to develop and implement their own evaluation policies in 1985, within the framework of provincial policy and guidelines.

You have been making strenuous efforts to prepare the appropriate evaluation policies and procedures and to initiate evaluations. School, program, teacher and student guidelines are now in place. The system evaluation policy and procedures will depend on the results of this system review.

Evaluation (which in many public sector organizations is a specialized and separate function) is a primary line function of the central office. Consequently it is an integral part of the responsibility of the Curriculum and Instruction and Pupil Services departments.

In this section we discuss school evaluations. Teacher evaluations are discussed in the next chapter on human resource management.

To date you have conducted three school evaluations under the new scheme: Clover Bar Junior High, Fort Saskatchewan Elementary and F.R. Haythorne. You plan to conduct three in 1986/87.

2. Observations

The process you have adopted for school evaluations is very extensive. It consumes a substantial portion of the time of many central office people and of the staff of the school being evaluated. Given your present

process, it is unlikely that you will be able to do more than two or three evaluations per year. This means at best that each school will be evaluated every ten years.

The school and central office staff involved in the Clover Bar evaluation are generally satisfied with the content of the process. But the level of effort required is a serious problem. A tremendous amount of documentation was required. The evaluation program covered all aspects of school activities: programs, facilities, instruction, discipline, staff deployment and coordination, relations with parents, budgeting and accounting, extra-curricular activities, student records, etc., etc.

The evaluation team consisted of 15 people. The school staff consists of 25 teachers and 3 administrators. Almost all core, optional, and special education programs were evaluated. All teachers were observed in teaching situations. Because you are using a "strengths model" of evaluation, staff members were interviewed repetitively by different members of the evaluation team. One out of ten students were interviewed. And all parents were surveyed.

The school evaluation amounts to, in effect, also an evaluation of the school principal. There is also a partial evaluation of all teachers and most programs.

It may well be that, if other review mechanisms were in place to deal with some of the subjects covered by the school evaluation, the school evaluation could be streamlined. For example there is a clear duplication between program evaluations and school evaluations. A proper program evaluation also requires interviewing and observing each teacher in a program area. Facility reviews could be conducted separately from school evaluations and concentrate on those schools where there are particular facility problems.

Furthermore if you adopt our organizational recommendations, in particular the establishment of sectoral supervisors responsible solely for groups of schools, a strong supervisor role could reduce the need for an extensive evaluation process.

We have suggested and you have agreed that, as part of Phase II of our project, we examine in depth the school evaluation process.

3. Recommendation

Review the school evaluation process.

IX

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

In this chapter we review the areas of human resource planning, staffing, professional development, and teacher evaluation.

A. HUMAN RESOURCE PLANS ARE WELL DEVELOPED

1. Background

As we indicated in Chapter III, staff costs represent the lion's share of the education budget. Furthermore the number and calibre of teaching staff are the most important factors in your ability to achieve the goals of schooling. You have recently had to reduce staff, and staff reductions will be required in the future owing to declining enrolments.

2. Observations

In general we find that your human resource planning activities are very well conducted. Planning and Operations estimates the enrolment for the coming year and, given the pupil/teacher ratio, the total professional staffing requirements at the school level. Personnel then converts this overall requirement into specific requirements by skill and school. The planning process is responsive to organizational changes, and new programs. The number of teachers required by skill level, type and location is carefully planned based on expected workloads, expected retirements, and such factors as maternity leave. Implementation is properly costed, scheduled and assigned.

The eventual number of FTEs for a school is the result of a complex set of formulas based on pupil/teacher ratios for subject areas, instruction time and allowances for preparation time administration and professional development. The allowance for "admin time" has clearly been inadequate recently. As a result of all the new initiatives taking place, many meetings with principals have had to be held. It is not that these meetings are seen as unnecessary, but the admin time has not been budgeted for them. For example, we were informed that one principal of a small school had already spent all the allowed admin time on required meetings by the month of May this year. This means that, in addition to inadequate provision for meetings, in-school administration time is not budgeted adequately.

In addition, declining enrolments and new special programs are squeezing administration and related counselling and coordination time. For example, some administrative activities are facility rather than enrolment

related, such as housekeeping. The time requirement is the same although the allowance would be reduced in relation to enrolment figures.

3. Recommendation

Consider increasing the budgets for administration time.

B. STRENGTHEN STAFFING POLICIES

1. Background

Staffing refers to the choice of individuals to fill vacant positions from available candidates, as opposed to determining the number of positions. It also refers to which staff members will be released when the number of staff has to be reduced.

2. Observations

Currently there is an over-supply of teachers. Thus the availability of requisite skills is not a problem. Conversely, however, a problem arises in that the system has an obligation to staff with tenure but their skills or other attributes may not match the requirements a principal finds most desirable. The principal has to build a team of compatible individuals who will work together effectively. Consequently situations have arisen in which principals complain of having staff "forced" upon them.

This issue is perhaps more important than might initially appear. If a school principal is to be held accountable for the achievement of educational objectives in terms of student achievement, then in principle s/he should have full authority to hire (and fire) staff members. Clearly such a principle conflicts to some degree with system-wide personnel policies as well as terms and conditions of employment which have been negotiated. Within reason, therefore, principals should be given a right of refusal or, when there are several prospective candidates, the choice of which candidate to select. However, in the long run, the issue of staff suitability has to be dealt with when new teachers are appointed to the system.

We consider that you should insist upon the most thorough possible review of candidates including thorough reference checking and use of psychological assessments in selection. We were told of instances of reinstatement of incompetent staff. And of instances where reference checks would have revealed unsuitability. Psychological assessments can be a valuable tool in the selection process -- not by any means the only tool but one among several that can increase the probability of a successful appointment. You should develop a profile of the attributes that make for a successful teacher in the Strathcona context, in addition to the requisite educational qualifications.

Such a profile can be developed by giving a battery of tests to the known most successful teachers in the system, and by identifying the attributes and the tests that discriminate those attributes for successful teachers. These tests should then be given to all new candidates.

A staff reduction policy is in place. Reductions are based upon a combination of seniority and training. The policy should also include consideration of teacher evaluations (these are discussed in Section D. below).

A problem has arisen with respect to transfers. A transfer takes place when a reduction is required in one school but a position is available in another school. The staff reduction policy has been applied to transfers as well as separations. This does not necessarily result in the selection of the most appropriate person to transfer. For example a recently-recruited teacher in a specialized field that is needed at a particular school may be transferred rather than a teacher with many years' service at the same school who does not have that particular skill. And often it is the longer service person who could most benefit from the transfer.

We have raised concerns about the staffing process here not so much because we find fault with the process itself but because of the supreme importance of making the right decisions. By far the bulk of the procedures used are commendable. All things being equal, current staff have priority over new staff. Merit as well as personal fit are considered. Grievance procedures are in place. Policies and procedures are sensitive to individual needs and to the Human Rights Code.

3. Recommendations

- Allow principals the maximum possible choice of staff within system-wide constraints.
- Review new staff candidates very thoroughly, including reference checks and behavioural assessments such as the SRI instruments.
- Adopt a transfer policy that reflects the respective needs of the schools involved rather than being based on the staff reduction policy.
- Consider teacher evaluations as one input to staff reduction decisions.

C. DEVELOP SYSTEM-WIDE IN-SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

1. Background

Professional development and in-service are key methods for ensuring teachers know the programs they have to deliver and are competent to deliver them. Many sources of funds are tapped for professional development and the resources are then allocated to schools on a pro rata basis. Priorities are set at many levels: by individual teachers, principals, personnel department, the Board, and the Department of Education. Personnel has a coordination role in tracking program delivery, obtaining views on program quality and monitoring budgets and expenses.

We discussed the coordination of in-service activities in the previous chapter. Here we are more concerned with how you plan the content of in-service and professional development.

2. Observations

In most organizations training and development is considered the responsibility of the personnel department. However, just like evaluation, training is a major line responsibility within the central office rather than a staff function. Developing and implementing programs, preparing staff to deliver them, and evaluating the results is the major role of the Curriculum and Instruction and Pupil Services departments. And the central office staff in those departments are responsible for the delivery of much of the in-service programs.

In our view this is an area that requires more planning and prioritizing than has been the case. It will be argued that professional development in an education system is to a large degree the responsibility of the individual professional. However resources are limited. The needs of the system as a whole cannot be left entirely to individual preferences and choices.

Therefore we recommend that (under the new organization we propose) the Director, Programs and the Director, Special Education be responsible for preparing an annual plan for school staff for in-service and professional development combined. This plan should begin with an identification of system-wide in-service and development needs based on forecast skill requirements for the medium term (three to five years) compared to the availability of skills in the system. These system-wide needs should be built up from needs identified by principals at the school level. Individual teacher preferences should be taken into account at that point. But the principal should recommend to central office what he considers to be the most important training needs. Then these needs should be rolled up into system-wide needs to form the basis of the allocation of professional development resources.

System-wide in-service as well as development priorities should be established and resources allocated accordingly. Alternative delivery methods should be identified and evaluated. At this point you may decide that a proportion of the available resources should still be decentralized to the schools. However you may find it cost effective to centralize most of the resources. Most development needs justify a system-wide thrust, including even the development of special training programs, that are more cost effective than individual staff arranging for their own training. Furthermore you are in a much better position to evaluate the effectiveness of such development efforts by setting and monitoring the achievement of predetermined learning goals and behavioural changes objectives.

3. Recommendations

- Forecast skill requirements and identify system-wide in-service and development needs.
- Prepare an annual plan and budget for meeting needs.

D. REVIEW THE TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS

1. Background

Teacher evaluation is required by provincial policy. Teachers are evaluated twice in their first year of appointment in order to assist in tenure decisions and again during the second year in order to assist in certification decisions. Subsequently teachers are supposed to be evaluated once every three years by school principals. A teacher evaluation policy and procedure are in place. An evaluation policy and procedure for school administrators is still in the formative stage. Classified and central office staff receive annual performance appraisals.

2. Observations

Teacher evaluation is not only a provincial and system requirement, it is also a major tool for monitoring and improving teacher performance. It is based on the principle that employees will perform better when they know their goals and how well they are achieving them.

In a professional organization, staff tend to resist criticism, which any evaluation is likely to make since few individuals are capable of continuously perfect performance. Professionals tend to believe in self-evaluation, which is indeed provided for in your policy, as opposed to even formative, but particularly summative evaluations. As a result you make every effort to ensure that the evaluations conducted by administrators are as objective as possible. Indeed we have been told that no "opinions" are allowed in teacher evaluations. The

evaluations must be based on factual observations of teacher performance against measurable criteria.

However we submit that it is impossible to do a personnel evaluation without the evaluator taking the responsibility to express a necessarily personal opinion on the evaluatee's performance. Since not all performance criteria are measurable, if one evaluates solely against performance criteria that can be measured, the evaluation is bound to be distorted. This is particularly true of teachers in such areas as motivating students, student achievement versus potential, or fitting in and contributing to the professional team.

Because of the strive for objectivity, teacher evaluation take, according to principals, 12 to 15 hours to conduct. It is not always done as frequently as required. It is already regarded as as chore (eating into scarce admin time). Principals are there quite adverse to others to increasing the frequency of evaluations. Indeed we were also told of instances where evaluations were not done as frequently as they should be.

Formative, i.e. improvement-oriented evaluation is one of the most important roles of the principal. In most organizations that consider evaluation important it is done at least annually. Yet in an educational system, evaluation is a much more important tool than it is in many other types of organizations. A school principal does not "supervise" a teacher in the conventional sense. Within policy and curriculum guidelines, the teacher largely makes his or her own decisions on how to teach. Thus ongoing teacher evaluation is one of the few methods available to the principal to monitor and improve teacher performance and thereby to ensure that school and educational objectives are met to the maximum extent.

Therefore we believe that teacher evaluation should be carried out annually on a formal basis, and indeed much more frequently informally. This should be considered one of the most important roles of the principal. The principal should, in discussion with the teacher, set annual goals, assess the achievement against those goals, discuss with the teacher how he or she can improve, and thereby set new goals for the next period. Such goals could include, for example:

- Learning and teaching a new program.
- Developing presentation skills.
- Attending workshops on areas where skills need to be improved.
- Achieving target grades on provincial tests.
- Student attendance.

To do formal evaluations annually will require simplification of the evaluation process, but, paradoxically, we believe this will also strengthen the process. A simpler appraisal form needs to be developed that will identify the major performance criteria and report both the principal's **opinion** as well as numerical scores against each criterion. Criteria should include:

- The various categories of teaching skills such as lesson planning, presentation, discipline, etc.
- Student achievement.
- Utilization (teaching hours).
- Learning development.
- Rapport with peers.
- Adherence to policy.

The above list is not intended to be either complete or final. It is merely indicative of the concept that we are suggesting.

An important feature of our proposed approach to evaluation is that is requires a principal to act as a manager rather than a professional peer. Teacher performance is equally the responsibility of the principal as well as the responsibility of the individual teacher. Mature individuals who are jointly interested in achieving educational objectives can make such a relationship work. But it may require significant changes in attitudes in some situations.

The question of the respective roles of Personnel and Curriculum and Instruction arises in this context as in others. Personnel evaluation is essentially a responsibility of the line manager at each level. This means that principals should evaluate teachers, and Curriculum and Instruction department should evaluate principals. This should apply also to teachers on probation, who are currently evaluated by Personnel, as well as certification, which is the responsibility of Curriculum and Instruction. Personnel should develop the evaluation policy in full consultation with principals and central office departments and should monitor and report to the Superintendent how well that policy is being implemented.

Similar to our recommendation on school evaluation, we have agreed with you that we examine the teacher evaluation process in Phase II of our project.

3. Recommendation

Review the teacher evaluation process.

X

SUPPORT SERVICES

This chapter reviews the Data Processing, Facilities Management, and Transportation functions.

A. MAKE DATA PROCESSING MORE EFFECTIVE

1. Background

The Data Processing department has developed and operates a number of applications for both the municipality and the education system: payroll/personnel, general ledger, accounts receivable, accounts payable, tax assessment. In addition the department operates one major application for the school system, MARS, the Student Records Mark and Reporting System.

The Executive Assistant, Research and Development, who reports to the Superintendent, has also been significantly involved in the development of data processing applications. The Executive Assistant is responsible for advising on the acquisition of in-school equipment (micro-computers), maintaining the MARS files, and encouraging and monitoring the development of new applications at the school level and in central office. His role may be loosely described as user liaison.

Several system are in pilot stages, such as electronic mail, on-line retrieval to the mainframe from schools, and local area networks for schools.

Two major issues face the Data Processing department: the change to a school fiscal year, and the fact that the DEC 20, acquired in 1983, is being phased out by the supplier.

The data processing budget amounts to slightly over $1,000,000, of which $454,000 is allocated to education.

A senior management data processing steering committee is in place but rarely meets.

2. Observations

Like many such departments, Data Processing has grown since the early 70s in response to the enthusiasm of a few key individuals and pressures for information processing assistance from users who have sensed the need. Much of the development has been and continues to be ad hoc without much senior

management involvement and direction. Users do not express any major dissatisfaction with the services they receive, but are not really aware of the potential and the importance of their role in deciding their information needs and ensuring they obtain them. The specification, development, and provision of information needs of departments and schools cannot be left entirely to systems analysts and programmers in a service department.

In our view you need to take strong measures to ensure Data Processing is properly managed within the system. Specifically you need to:

- Develop a strategic plan that identifies the major current applications, the major applications to be developed within the next five years, and the likely equipment and staffing requirements to develop and operate current and new systems.

- Undertake an education program for users of data processing applications so that they understand their role in defining information requirements, ensuring applications developed meet their needs, and ensuring that their required service levels in terms of timeliness, relevance, accuracy, and cost of information are met.

- Develop a system for full costing of development projects and systems applications and make users accountable for those costs.

- Base Data Processing budgets on application development and operations plans, and on up-to-date technology, rather than marginal adjustments to previous budget envelopes.

- Examine whether the research and development role is really one of an executive assistant or would be more appropriately placed within a central office department, such as Planning and Operations (analogous to having the budgeting function in Planning and Operations and the accounting function in Corporate Services).

- Strengthen the role of the steering committee so that this committee approves all applications and equipment decisions and the associated resource implications.

3. Recommendations

- Take a more proactive approach to managing the information function for the central office and schools by instituting proper planning, budgeting, and control procedures and using Data Processing department as a service department that is given clear objectives and cost targets, but which is not held responsible for management decisions.

- ► Refer to the Data Processing audit criteria for specific guidance on how to adopt such an approach.

B. CONTINUE IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS WITH AND PRODUCTIVITY OF FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

1. Background

Schools represent the bulk of the County's facilities for which the Facilities department is responsible. Proper maintenance is important because it increased facility life and improves the school environment. Parks and Recreation department maintains school grounds. Parks and Recreation uses school facilities for community activities outside school hours. Schools of course also use school grounds and recreation facilities for sports and other activities.

The Facilities annual operating budget is almost $9 million, of which $6.5 million is attributable to education including about $1 million for custodial services which are contracted out but controlled by the Facilities department. This budget includes provision for utility costs and leasehold improvements.

Total staff in the department is 65 including 45 tradesmen responsible for conducting work as specified in work orders which are prepared in response to work requests or budget requests approved by the Board.

Department coordinators prepare work orders which may involve emergency, routine, or preventive maintenance assignments. Coordinators provide manhour and material estimates and check the budget to ensure that funds are available. Estimating is generally done by experience with occasional reference to published estimating guides.

Tradesmen begin their days at the main office except for one assigned to Fort Saskatchewan. Transportation is provided to the job site. Each tradesman keeps a daily log. Daily logs are not referred to to update work order estimates as frequently as would be desirable for good cost control.

Daily scheduling of work is manually controlled by one scheduler who coordinates all work orders.

2. Observations

In terms of service to users, particularly schools, facilities maintenance was a serious issue up to about two years ago. Since then the situation has much improved. However conflicts still arise over use of school facilities and grounds. Not all concerned appear to recognize that schools are essentially a community resource. Consequently opportunities are not being fully capitalized upon in such areas as:

- Involving Parks and Recreation in planning new schools.
- Utilizing schools for teacher professional development activities outside school hours.
- Utilizing other County facilities for school activities, such as the Wilderness Centre.

While relationships are much better, communication between tradesmen and administrators and between physical education teachers and Parks foremen can still improved.

The department functions as effectively as possible under a manual control system. However, opportunities are available to reduce costs through implementation of a computerized maintenance control package. Such a package should include work order generation and control, scheduling and parts inventory control. The department is currently reviewing several packages.

Once such a system is in place, you should develop workload standards for use in estimating manhour needs. Daily logs should continue to be maintained but also input into the system to allow immediate updating of standard data. We estimate that manpower reductions between 5 and 10 people would be available through implementation of the computerized system and workload standards. In addition the efficiency and responsiveness of your maintenance staff should increase.

School caretakers are hired and supervised by Facilities department. School principals have little or no authority over what they do or when they do it. For example caretaker schedules do not always take into account the specific situation of an individual school. Some children arrive at schools in the winter half an hour before the school opens. I would seem appropriate for caretakers to report to principals directly.

3. Recommendations

- Continue to work on improving the relationships between central office and schools on the one hand and Facilities and Parks and Recreation departments on the other.
- Introduce computerized work order and parts planning and control.
- Develop workload standards for estimating and controlling productivity.
- Consider having school caretakers report to principals.

C. STUDENT TRANSPORTATION IS WELL MANAGED

1. Background

The Student Transportation Services department was established in 1977. It operates under the rules and regulations of the School Act. The annual operating budget is about $2.5 million for student transportation, plus an additional $1.6 million for the transit operation. The fleet consist of 101 school buses of which 62 are owned and 39 are contracted. The fleet includes two 48-seat and three 23-seat vehicles for use in the special education program.

Core routes have been established to accommodate students who would otherwise have to walk 1.5 miles or more. This covers 681 students. A special winter program was recently introduced to include 509 students who must walk between 1 and 1.5 miles. This program appears to have been well received and will likely continue. All administration to support the busing program, such as photographs, bus passes, and control of abuse of bus passes is handled by the Student Transportation department.

2. Observations

While we received a few comments from the public that indicated perceived inefficiencies in the school bus routing, we did not find this to be the case. The only major opportunity for improving efficiency would be to merge the bussing operation with the separate school system.

Maintenance of all vehicles is well controlled. Each vehicle receives a semi-annual maintenance check. These checks are spread out over the year to ensure that spares are kept to a low a level as possible. Records are kept for each vehicle. Fuel logs are reviewed monthly to ensure that difficulties are identified and corrected quickly. While the budget for repairs and maintenance is controlled by the Student Transportation department, maintenance work is conducted by the Vehicles and Equipment department.

The department has a policy of replacing buses every 10 years. Based on an average of about 9,000 miles per year per vehicle, this appears to be a sound policy to ensure that operating costs are kept to a minimum.

The current cost of the County-owned vehicles is estimated at $2.15 per mile. This is extremely good for this type of operation. Contracted services produce an average operating cost of $1.95 per mile. This cost is lower because of the higher travel distance per vehicle on contracted routes. Thus increasing the number of routes that are contracted out does not appear to offer any operating cost savings.

Safety is a prime consideration. Safety is considered when routes are established as well as riding time to ensure that students are not held unnecessarily long on the vehicles. All routes are monitored every four to six

weeks to ensure that drivers are performing in a safe manner. Annual training sessions and award presentations are held and coordinated by a resident driver-trainer. Over 70% of the drivers have completed a special education program for school bus drivers. The balance are scheduled to complete the course in the near future. The department has an Accident Review Board to investigate every accident that occurs.

Vehicles appear to be well utilized. Since 1979 the fleet has supported a transit feeder service into Edmonton. In addition, approximately 100,000 miles per year are covered by the fleet to support field trips over and above the normal bus routes which represent about 440,000 miles per year.

In summary the department appears to operate in an efficient and effective manner. Maintenance is well controlled. An effective replacement policy has been established. Safety and training programs are in place as well as monitoring systems to ensure that drivers perform with a high level of proficiency.

3. Recommendations

None.

Appendix A

REVIEW CRITERIA

INTRODUCTION

The review criteria described in this Appendix represent the general principles that we consider should apply to the Education System in the areas covered by the review. The criteria were used as benchmarks against which we compared the findings from each review project.

The criteria are necessarily stated in somewhat general terms. Typically they need to be interpreted according to the activity or organizational unit being reviewed. They may also be modified as the review progresses if it is found that they do not apply to a particular review project.

The criteria have been obtained from a number of sources and adapted to suit the nature of the education system. Sources include:

- The annual reports of the Office of the Auditor-General of Canada.
- The Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation.
- Comprehensive audits we have conducted.
- Experience of our consultants and their sources.
- The Operational Handbook for Schools.
- Discussions with your staff.

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A. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Responsibilities for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies are be clearly defined and communicated to all those concerned**

   - Conflicts in roles and responsibilities that relate to policy formulation are be identified and resolved.

2. **Policies are developed and/or revised in a manner that ensures due consideration is given to the needs of students, schools, and departments and to the resource implications of implementing them**

   - The relevant needs, problems and deficiencies in departmental and school programs are determined, through relevant consultation where appropriate, and taken into account when assessing the need to develop or revise policies.

   - Alternative policies are evaluated in terms of likely effectiveness, operational and cost implications for departments and schools and compatibility with other policies.

   - Policies are communicated clearly to departments, schools and students and include guidelines as appropriate.

3. **Policies are monitored to assess compliance and evaluated to assess their effectiveness**

   - Systems are in place to monitor the adherence to policies of departments and schools and to evaluate the degree to which they are achieving the desired result in a cost-effective manner.

   - The results of monitoring and evaluation are used in the revision and development of policies.

B. PLANNING

1. **Appropriate analysis of the system's environment concerning both the current situation and future trends is conducted**

   - ► Enrolment trends are monitored, future enrolment is forecast, and the changing needs of the present and future student population are identified and assessed.

   - ► Critical aspects of the environment including socio-economic trends, technological changes, parent and community consensus and changing local provincial government priorities are identified and monitored.

   - ► The opportunity for working with other boards of education with whom services can be shared is assessed.

2. **System objectives are stated and periodically reviewed**

   - ► Within practical limits, Board objectives are clearly defined in ways that will permit evaluation of results and effectiveness in meeting student and community needs. Objectives are consistent with the Board's legislative mandate, relevant to County policies and objectives, and reflect guidelines and directives received from the provincial government. Statements of objectives form the basis for the development of strategic and operational plans.

   - ► Program and operational objectives are linked to system objectives and, wherever possible and reasonable, are measurable and quantified.

   - ► Objectives and priorities are clearly communicated throughout the system.

   - ► The Board periodically reviews objectives and priorities in light of the changing environment.

3. **Alternative strategies are identified and analyzed and strategic plans are adopted**

   - ► A strategic planning process exists, is communicated and understood and is applied.

   - ► The respective roles of the administration and the Board for strategic planning are clear.

- ► Strategic plans reflect an analysis of the environment, the Board's objectives, goals, priorities and legal mandate, community inputs, and school, program, and system evaluation results.

- ► Alternative ways of meeting the future demand for educational services in the county are evaluated in the context of political realities, costs, benefits, risks, and assessment of the system's strengths and weaknesses and availability of funding. Current resources or facilities do not rigidly constrain alternatives. Decisions on the alternatives selected are based on adequate information.

- ► Strategic plans re-affirm or revise the Board's mandate, objectives, strategies, policies, resources required, and results expected. They set directions in terms of the student population to be served, kinds and levels of service to be provided, activities required and their timing and responsibilities, financial and other resource implications, and expected results. Decisions on the alternatives selected are based on adequate information.

4. **Annual operational plans are prepared**

- ► Operational plans:
  - Clearly relate to strategic plans.
  - Indicate expected results to provide a means of measuring their effectiveness.
  - Indicate, where relevant, the impact on efficiency -- the quantities of services provided relative to their cost -- and the quality of service.
  - Include the necessary resource requirements in the responsibility centre's budget.

- ► Operational plans are developed with the direct involvement of the management responsible for their implementation and reflect management commitment.

- ► Operational planning systems provide for the consistent and coordination integration of school, program, and departmental plans into total plans. Operational planning systems and financial physical and human resource budgeting are coordinated.

- ► Plans are clearly communicated as required and the responsibilities for implementing the plan are assigned.

C. FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT CONTROL

1. **Responsibility for and leadership of the financial management function** is **clearly provided. The position responsible should:**

   - ► Recommend and interpret financial policies and guidelines to the Superintendent.
   - ► Report, through the Superintendent, to the Board on the spending plans and performance of schools and departments and on the adequacy of supporting financial and management control systems.
   - ► Identify the requirements for financial skills and actions needed to acquire and maintain them.
   - ► Report to the Superintendent on budget preparation and control systems, and cost accounting and other performance measurement systems.
   - ► Assist the Superintendent in assessing department spending in relation to plans.

2. **Budgeting and control systems provide a sound basis for review and control of expenditures and performance by management**

   - ► Responsibilities for budgetary control and expenditure approval are clearly assigned.
   - ► Budgetary control systems monitor school and departmental spending against budgets.
   - ► Accounting systems satisfy school and departmental managers' needs for timely and accurate reporting to help them monitor, analyze and control their costs and performance.
   - ► Actual costs and performance are periodically reported and compared to plans and budgets and corrective action is taken where appropriate. Reports at each level of management are consistent with the authority to authorize expenditures.
   - ► The quality of management information is ensured through adequate review, documentation, training and procedural controls.

D. SYSTEM, PROGRAM AND SCHOOL EVALUATION

1. Effectiveness is evaluated

- The Board ensures adequate processes exist for assessing the attainment of educational goals and the economy and efficiency of the educational delivery systems.
- Policies, guidelines and procedures for the evaluation of schools, programs, and the overall system are established, communicated, and followed.
- Policies, guidelines and procedures follow the guidelines established under the provincial government's Management and Finance Plan.

2. Evaluation is cost effective

- Objectives and effects are specified as precisely as possible. Within practical limits, program, school, and system objectives are clearly defined in ways that will enhance their evaluability.
- Objectives and effects that can be measured are identified.
- Evaluation procedure reflect the state of the art and are cost justified. Departments are well informed about evaluation activities in other jurisdictions and take advantage of that information in planning their own evaluations.
- Evaluations assess the extent to which strategic and operational objectives are being accomplished.
- Departments develop comprehensive school and program evaluation plans and guidelines that ensure the timely and accurate assessment of the accomplishment of major activities. Relevant input from schools, staff, students and the community is obtained.
- Each school and each major program is evaluated at least once every five years, or more frequently as needed.
- System evaluation is conducted at least once every five years. This includes evaluation of corporate services support programs.
- Appropriately qualified staff conduct evaluations and adequate resources are provided.

- Evaluations are validated.

3. **Evaluations are used to increase effectiveness**

   - Results of evaluations are reported to those responsible for the activities evaluated and to the Board of Education. Action is taken on evaluation findings and responsibilities for and timing of implementation are assigned and controlled.

   - Evaluations are used to increase effectiveness. Evaluations lead to improved understanding of programs and their impact and improved quality of education. This may lead to reaffirming, modifying, or discontinuing a policy or program or changing funding levels.

   - Feedback on the results of evaluations is provided to those affected by the evaluations.

E. ORGANIZATION

1. **Organizational units reflect appropriate grouping of tasks**

   - Alternative criteria for grouping tasks are considered, such as function, geography, service, client or some combination.
   - Tasks are grouped so as to maximize coordination within groups and minimize coordination between groups.
   - Tasks are grouped as far as possible so that individual groups can be uniquely responsible for an identifiable part of the organization's output.

2. **Staff groups improve overall organizational performance**

   - Functions are centralized when they result in improved performance of line departments and schools.
   - Economies from centralization are justified if they result in lower efficiency or effectiveness of line departments and schools.
   - Staff policies and decisions that infringe on departmental and school activities are approved at the level where staff and line report jointly.

3. **Authority is delegated to the level of maximum decision-making efficacy**

   - The level of decentralization of authority reflects an appropriate balance of control, accountability for results, and familiarity with operational needs.
   - Authority is delegated and assigned so as not to create conflicts of interest and objectives.
   - Responsibility and accountability are commensurate and clear.

4. **Spans of control reflect management workload**

   - Spans of control are based on the degree of supervision required, the extent of interaction among subordinates, the similarity of subordinates' responsibilities, and the frequency of non-delegated decisions.

F. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

1. **The actions of the Board, central office staff and school administrators reflect community needs and concerns**

   - As part of the strategic planning process, accurate and relevant information is obtained on attitudes of parents and non-parents in the County and the City of Fort Saskatchewan to the Board's policies, plans and budgets in such areas as school transportation and attendance areas and policies.

   - School administrators to have a formal process for obtaining opinions from parents in their communities on current and proposed school programs and facilities, student supervision and discipline, and other relevant concerns.

   - Board representation facilitates understanding of community needs and concerns. Public attendance at Board meetings is encouraged.

2. **Community members are fully informed of system plans and activities**

   - The Board disseminates adequate information on its policies and plans through appropriate media which ensure full coverage of community membership.

   - School administrators communicate openly, frequently and systematically with parents on student progress and placement, behaviour policies and procedures, school activities and events, and policies on or action taken to address current concerns.

   - Parents are encouraged to participate in school activities and parent-teacher conferences.

   - Departments advise schools on effective communication methods and practices.

G. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Achievement standards for all educational programs are developed and approved**

   - ► All program content, as a minimum, covers the Alberta Program of Studies and other provincially funded programs (e.g., E.O.F.).
   - ► System-wide standards are established for provincial programs.
   - ► Requirements of other provincially funded programs (e.g., E.O.F.) are also be met as a minimum.
   - ► Where curriculum is developed at the school or system level, appropriate standards are developed and adopted.
   - ► Standards are expressed in terms that permit evaluation of whether they have been achieved.

2. **Curriculum is developed to add to or enhance programs where the need or opportunity for enhanced achievement is met most cost-effectively within available resources**

   - ► The need for program additions or enhancements is properly documented and approved.
   - ► Alternatives are examined and their respective costs and benefits analyzed by qualified staff.
   - ► New or modified programs are designed and introduced with appropriate curriculum guides, instructional resources, in-service support, pilot implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
   - ► In-service programs are designed with the aim of enabling all teaching staff to be fully capable of meeting program standards within a reasonable time-frame.

3. **Special Education programs are designed and implemented to improve student achievement, self concept and socialization**

   - ► Guidelines for testing students and placement in special programs are developed and based on the most cost-effective approach to optimizing student achievement.

- Tests used to determine placement discriminate accurately with respect to achievement and likelihood of its improvement.
- The criteria for curriculum development (above) are complied with.

H. STUDENT EVALUATION

1. **Student evaluation policies and procedures are designed to assess achievement fairly and accurately**

   - ► Guidelines for evaluation are defined and communicated to schools to ensure consistency and appropriate levels of achievement.
   - ► Formal evaluations are conducted periodically by qualified teachers, reviewed by the Principal and relevant central office departments, and externally validated where feasible.
   - ► System-wide analyses of evaluations are conducted to ensure fairness, accuracy and consistency.
   - ► School evaluations review compliance with the student evaluation policy.

2. **Evaluations are used to indicate the potential need for individual, school and system program changes**

   - ► Students whose achievement does not meet teachers' assessment of their capabilities receive appropriate guidance and counselling.
   - ► School evaluations include a review of student evaluations to assess the need for school program changes.
   - ► System-wide reviews of student evaluations are considered in curriculum and special education programming.

3. **Students are aware of expectations of them and their actual achievement**

   - ► Students and parents are fully informed of the criteria against which their achievement will be assessed.
   - ► Teachers review and discuss achievement with students on a periodic basis and use the reviews to seek ways of optimizing achievement.

I. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

1. **Guidance and counselling is available to all students**

   - ► All students has assigned to a counsellor.
   - ► Counsellors meet periodically with all students for whom they are responsible either in groups or individually on point of need. Counsellors review students' progress with them and counsel them on any issues arising or any matters the students wish to resolve.

2. **Guidance and counselling programs identify obstacles to student achievement**

   - ► Counsellors review the achievement of all students at appropriate intervals in conjunction with teachers and administrators.
   - ► Student files clearly indicate achievement and scores on standardized tests.
   - ► Counsellors advise students on appropriate educational programs from the various levels of schooling.

3. **Guidance and counselling assist in devising appropriate solutions for students not achieving their potential**

   - ► Where feasible, tests and other techniques used diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of students.
   - ► Counsellors collaborate in determining the most appropriate and cost-effective program for remedial instruction or behaviour modification.
   - ► Placement in special education programs is through a consultative process involving students' parents, counsellors and other professionals.
   - ► Counsellors serve as a link to support agencies outside the schools and, in collaborating with parents and administrators, recommend referrals as appropriate.

4. **Counsellors collaborate with teachers and parents in monitoring and communicating student progress**

   - ► Counsellors advise and assist in monitoring student progress in special programs and in adapting programs accordingly.

- Counsellors advise students, parents, and administrators regarding the placement of students in affective and vocational programs.

- Counsellors establish a clear communication process with students, parents and other school staff members.

J. HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

1. **The demand for human resources is forecast**

   - The human resource implications of enrolment forecasts, organization change, new programs, changes to legislation and system priorities are considered.
   - The number, type, level and location of employees needed to carry out departmental, program and school objectives are identified.
   - The determination of human resource requirements is based on expected workloads and staffing guidelines where appropriate.

2. **The future availability of existing human resources is forecast**

   - Current, accurate inventories are maintained of basic employment data for all employees including relevant career data such as experience, skills, and promotion potential for critical occupational groups and levels.
   - The forecast of resource availability is based on an analysis of turnover, retirement profiles, promotion potential, succession planning and other relevant data.

3. **The demand for human resources is compared with the future availability of existing resources to identify shortages and surpluses**

   - The impact of identified shortages or surpluses, where significant, is taken into account in the preparation of operational and financial plans.

4. **Action plans are prepared to resolve identified imbalances in the number of skills human resources**

   - Action plans such as recruitment, separation, training, development, or relocation identify the costs of implementation, the implementation time frame and the individuals responsible.
   - The implementation of action plans is monitored regularly and the results are assessed to determine the degree to which objectives are being met and the modifications that may be required.

K. STAFFING

1. **Staffing policy is appropriately developed and approved**

   - ► Staffing policy making allows for input from all parties affected.
   - ► Staffing policies and procedures are explicit as to lines of authority, responsibilities and roles.
   - ► Staffing policies reflect both system requirements and the needs of individual departments and schools.

2. **Staffing policy exists**

   - ► Management controls of the staffing function ensure that human resources are obtained efficiently and effectively to accomplish the objectives of the Board.
   - ► Procedures and documents required to initiate staffing actions comply with all policy and administrative requirements and are in accordance with good staffing practice.
   - ► Action, documents, and procedures to invite applications from qualified candidates are designed to provide for selection on the basis of merit.
   - ► Where internal and external candidates are equally qualified, the internal candidate is selected.
   - ► The assessment of the knowledge, abilities and personal suitability of candidates is based on merit and is adequate, fair, sensitive to the needs of the school or department and complies with all policy and departmental requirements.
   - ► Procedures used to appoint qualified candidates are adequate, accurate, provide for right of redress, and facilitate efficient placement of personnel.
   - ► Post-appointment activities such as probation, release or demotion for incompetence or incapacity, and staff reduction are adequate, fair, and sensitive to the needs of employees.
   - ► The right of redress is provided and all procedures comply with all policy and departmental requirements.

3. **Staffing plans are based on human resource and operational plans**

- The staffing program specifies the number, category, level and work location of persons sought, and when they are required.
- Where staffing standards (such as pupil/teacher ratios) exist, they are complied with.
- The purpose of the position, the main tasks to be carried out, the required qualifications and experience of the incumbent, and the terms and conditions of employment are documented and available to persons with staffing responsibilities.
- Personnel consults with departments to gain an understanding of the position to be staffed and communicates the policy and procedural requirements. Statements of qualifications are in accordance with the selection standards for the position and level to be staffed, and are not unduly restrictive.
- Supporting information systems provide accurate, relevant and timely data on candidates and vacancies.
- Turnaround times for the filling of positions are reasonable.

4. **Policies and methods for recruiting and selecting staff are chosen on the basis of equity and likely cost-effectiveness**

- Policies and procedures are established for internal versus external recruitment, advertising, screening, reference checking, interviewing, and negotiation offers, use of psychological appraisal and use of agencies. These policies and procedures maximize the likelihood of attracting and appointing qualified incumbents at a reasonable cost.
- The Human Rights Code is observed. Candidates' right of privacy and security of information are protected. The right of appeal is granted in accordance with relevant Board policy.
- Existing eligible lists and transfer lists are considered before establishing a competition and the method of selection. Eligible internal candidates have a reasonable opportunity to apply and an equal opportunity to compete.
- Assessment methods determine the relative merit of candidates efficiently and effectively. The method tests candidate abilities adequately, is consistently applied, reflects position requirements and is non-discriminatory.

- Screening procedures are fair, efficient, and adequately documented; candidates are advised of their status promptly. Offers of appointment are confirmed in writing and provide adequate information to the candidate; acceptances of offers are confirmed in writing.

- Staff participating in the selection process are chosen with due regard for competence, relationship to candidates, conflict of interest, and knowledge of how to assess candidates.

- Adequate controls ensure that such processes as transfers, appointment of incumbents to reclassified positions, extensions of terms, and acting appointments do not circumvent the competitive process.

5. **All new employees (including internal transfers) receive appropriate orientation to their new positions**

6. **The performance of new employees is closely monitored during the probationary period and prompt action is taken to rectify any perceived problems**

   - Probationary periods provide managers and employees with an accurate assessment of the employee's performance in the position.

   - Teacher certification is granted only upon management's judgment that successful performance of position requirements has been and will continue to be achieved.

   - Procedures for identification of and notice to surplus employees are followed and all reasonable efforts are made to provide employees with suitable alternative employment and/or training.

L. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR AND TEACHER IN-SERVICE AND DEVELOPMENT

1. **Responsibilities for in-service development are clearly defined and communicated**

   - Specified personnel are designated to: formulate and communicate development policies, standards and criteria; prepare development plans, methods and practice; ensure that alternatives are considered; and ensure that results are evaluated.

   - Assistant Superintendents and school administrators have the primary responsibility for identifying development needs. They participate in developing criteria for evaluating professional development, assist in assessing development alternatives for their staffs and review and approve development plans.

2. **Development needs are identified**

   - Individual, school, and department-wide development needs are identified in terms of the potential improvement in present and future job performance through improved skills, knowledge and motivation.

3. **Development programs are planned and their implementation controlled**

   - The costs and benefits of meeting each development need is determined. Development priorities are established and resources allocated accordingly. Alternative development methods are identified and evaluated. Programs are conducted and evaluated on a pilot basis before system-wide implementation.

   - Separate professional development and in-service budgets are prepared. All costs, including participant time, are identified, recorded and controlled against budgets.

   - Training facilities are appropriate to course objectives, well-utilized and economically justified. Instructor and course designer workload and performance standards are set and monitored.

4. **Development activities are evaluated**

   - Development undertaken is evaluated in terms of costs vs. benefits from improved job performance. Evaluation is based on predetermined learning goals and behavioural change objectives.

M. JOB EVALUATION AND COMPENSATION

1. **The Board has an established policy for setting compensation levels including its position with respect to market comparability**

2. **Job evaluation plans ensure internal equity among positions**

   - Evaluation decisions are based on accurate knowledge of current job content.
   - Criteria are consistently applied.
   - When job content changes significantly, the job is re-evaluated.
   - A senior-level review mechanism ensures consistency in the application of evaluation standards to resolve disagreements.

3. **Compensation and job evaluation policies are communicated to employees**

4. **Salaries and benefits are administered efficiently and in accordance with policy**

N. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL (INCL. TEACHER EVALUATION)

1. **Employee performance is reviewed and reviews are based on job-related criteria**

   - ► Employees are fully informed of their job duties and responsibilities and of the criteria against which their performance will be assessed.

   - ► Employees' goals and their achievements are related where possible to information derived from operational plans and their implementation.

   - ► Managers review and discuss performance with employees on a periodic basis and, where performance is below standard, develop and implement measures to improve performance.

2. **Employee performance is summarized at least annually in an appraisal report**

   - ► Appraisal reports contain the results of a performance review and, when required for planning, training, staffing, or other administrative purposes, information concerning career aspirations, training and development needs and employee potential.

   - ► Satisfactory appraisal reports are required before tenure and certification are granted and contracts are renewed.

3. **The performance appraisal process is monitored**

   - ► The extent of compliance of the performance appraisal process with policies and procedures is monitored and reported.

   - ► Appraisal reports of managers indicate the extent to which they carry out their appraisal responsibilities.

O. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

1. **The Board establishes policies and procedures for negotiating terms and conditions of employment**

   - ► Negotiation objectives are defined in concrete and measurable terms.
   - ► Proposed terms and conditions are based on current and accurate information.
   - ► The cost and benefits of terms and conditions are considered.

2. **Collective agreements are administered with the provisions contained therein**

   - ► The Board documents its policies on handling employee grievances.
   - ► Guidance are provided to managers and administrators regarding the content and intent of collective agreements, legislative requirements and significant arbitration findings.

3. **Employee grievances are minimized**

   - ► Managers are aware of the organizational climate, employee attitudes, and potential for, and causes of employee grievances.
   - ► Personnel department monitors adherence to the terms and conditions of employment agreements.
   - ► Prompt and appropriate action is taken to address the cause of employee grievances.
   - ► Appropriate review and appeal mechanisms are in place to resolve any issues that cannot be handled by line managers and Personnel staff.

P. CORPORATE SERVICES

1. **County Council and the Board of Education agree on policies for the major corporate services, which are developed and communicated and form the basis for the development of systems and procedures to support educational as well as municipal activities**

   - Policies, systems and procedures are developed in consultation with line departments, taking into consideration their relevant needs and requirements, and are approved by the Superintendent.

   - The policies and procedures set out the respective responsibilities for the conduct of corporate activities by staff departments and line managers.

2. **Operational objectives and work plans for corporate services reflect the needs of the Education System**

   - Corporate operational objectives, and work plans are derived from and support the systems objectives and strategic plans and provide for the projected need for services for new and on-going activities.

   - Resources are determined and allocated and priorities are set on the basis of educational operational objectives and work plans.

3. **Corporate activities are organized and coordinated to provide an acceptable level of service to education administrators**

   - Mechanisms are in place to ensure appropriate coordination and integration between corporate service staff and those using the services.

   - Standards to achieve acceptable levels of service are developed where appropriate.

4. **Corporate policies, systems, practices, levels of service and costs are monitored and their effectiveness evaluated**

   - Mechanisms to monitor major corporate service activities against work plans and service standards are in place and the extent to which the objectives of major activities are being met is evaluated.

   - The results of the evaluation are considered in the development and modification of corporate services policies, directives, and systems.

   - An accurate accounting of the costs incurred between municipal and education issues of corporate services is maintained.

Q. FACILITIES PLANNING

1. **Facility needs are assessed annually**

   - As part of the strategic planning process, the size, location and configuration of all schools are periodically assessed in relation to enrolment trends, forecasts and program and operational requirements and community use.

   - Responsibility and accountability for analyzing needs, conducting feasibility studies and developing proposals for new or modified facilities are clearly defined and communicated.

2. **Construction proposals are supported by accurate and complete documentation**

   - Each facilities project proposal is supported by an unbiased analysis of the need to be met and its relationships to statutory and Board objectives.

   - For each project there is a clear written statement of objectives which should be related to the defined needs. Where feasible, the objectives are stated in such a manner that the extent to which they are attained can be measured.

   - Alternative courses of action are evaluated impartially on the basis of differences in revenues, benefits and life-cycle costs (initial capital costs and the present value of operating and maintenance costs over the life of the assets). Options that are thoroughly analyzed include: contracting-out of activities to companies capable of doing the required work; leasing, as opposed to outright purchase; repairing or modifying existing facilities rather than replacing them; or delaying the project, perhaps indefinitely.

   - Capital cost estimates at all stages of the planning process are realistic and complete, covering all aspects of the project. An up-to-date estimate based on the actual design, schedule and site conditions is prepared before seeking final approval. The effects of possible future inflation are considered separately from other cost-increase factors. Estimates are expressed in both current and anticipated future dollar values.

3. **Final approval is based on full information**

   - When a project is first conceived, the Board approves only funds to conduct feasibility studies, develops a design and prepares

costs estimates. Final approval for expenditures on construction is given in the early stages of project planning only when adequate and complete information is available. Final approval of a project also awaits an up-to-date analysis of needs and alternatives.

4. **Project implementation is properly monitored and controlled**

   ► Management exercises control over projects during design and construction to ensure that facilities of the approved size and quality are completed on schedule and within the authorized budget. Adequate systems are used to control changes in design and to report progress, highlighting accountability for decisions taken and results achieved.

5. **Completed projects are reviewed**

   ► Each project is reviewed upon completion to:

   - Ascertain whether appropriate procedures were applied, economy and efficiency were observed and objectives were achieved.

   - Evaluate the performance of managers.

   - Develop recommendations for planning and controlling similar projects in the future.

R. FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

1. **Maintenance equipment and staff are appropriate to school facility performance needs**

   - ► Decisions on the number, size, and location of maintenance equipment, the number and skills of maintenance staff and the allocation of maintenance responsibilities are based on appropriate cost information and service needs.

   - ► Utilization of maintenance equipment and staff is monitored and controlled and taken into account when adding or deleting services and/or facilities.

2. **Maintenance policies and procedures are designed to meet school requirements at minimum cost**

   - ► Where feasible, maintenance is scheduled so that it does not cause operational problems for schools.

   - ► For non-routine repairs and maintenance, schools are informed of the estimated cost before the work is undertaken. Major repairs are not undertaken without assessing the option of disposal/replacement. Major repairs are monitored by facility.

   - ► Significant additional maintenance or repair work not undertaken without consultation with the school, including a revised cost estimate, and an assessment of the disposal/replacement alternative.

3. **Maintenance quality and costs is controlled**

   - ► Policies for in-house or contract maintenance lead to minimum overall maintenance cost to the system.

   - ► Maintenance performance is measured and ways of improving productivity is actively sought. Performance targets are set in terms of quality, time and cost; performance measures indicate if targets are being met; performance is reasonable in comparison to the private sector and to, where appropriate, work measurement standards.

   - ► Schools receive accurate, current and relevant information on actual facility maintenance costs.

   - ► Custodial policies and procedures ensure adequate facility security and safety.

S. VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

1. **The need for service is well-defined and related to approved policy**

   - ► Departments and schools evaluate objectively all reasonable ways of providing the service for which vehicles or equipment are proposed, including contracting the service.

   - ► There is an up-to-date forecast of the volume and type of vehicles and equipment needed by the system.

2. **Requirements for vehicles and equipment are defined in such a way that the service will be provided economically and efficiently**

   - ► The choice of vehicle and equipment types is based on a thorough analysis of capacity, reliability, and life cycle costs (acquisition, operating and maintenance).

   - ► Vehicle and equipment specifications are developed in relation to operational conditions. Specifications are stated in terms clear enough to ensure vehicles meet operational requirements while allowing for competitive tendering where feasible and not resulting in over specialized, non-standard units when not required.

   - ► The number of vehicles and equipment is based on County-wide operational needs and permit efficient vehicle utilization while allowing for demand fluctuations and reasonable down times for repair and maintenance.

3. **Vehicles and equipment are acquired with due regard for economy**

   - ► Vehicles acquired meet specifications.

   - ► Acquisition is initiated with sufficient lead time.

   - ► Responsibility for all steps in the acquisition process is clearly defined.

   - ► Policies for County acquisition and ownership versus commercial rental are clearly defined and lead to the lowest overall cost to the County while meeting user needs.

   - ► Within budgetary constraints, and given continuing needs, unit replacement is timed to minimize life cycle costs.

   - ► The County tendering policy is followed unless exceptions are authorized appropriately, based on lower life cycle costs. Volume discounts are obtained where feasible.

4. **In-service costs are minimized**

   - ► Standards for utilization of vehicles are established and actual utilization and performance is monitored. Disposal, rental, and alternative use options are examined for low utilization classes of units.

   - ► Procedures are in place to ensure adequate security and custody of vehicles.

5. **Disposal yields maximum net benefit to the County**

   - ► Repair/replacement/disposal options are regularly reviewed.

   - ► Items are disposed of if there is no continuing need for them.

T. SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

1. **The need for service is well defined and related to approved policy**

   - There is an up-to-date forecast of the numbers and locations of students to be bused for each school. Student eligibility is assessed against reasonable criteria.

   - This forecast is translated into the volume and type of buses and the numbers and qualifications of drivers needed.

   - All reasonable ways of providing a school transportation service are evaluated objectively including contracting the service.

2. **Requirements for buses are defined in such a way that the service will be provided efficiently and economically**

   - The choice of bus types is based on a thorough analysis of capacity, reliability, school locations and routes, and life-cycle costs (acquisition, operating and maintenance).

   - Bus specifications are developed in relation to operational conditions. Specifications are stated in terms clear enough to ensure buses meet operational requirements while allowing for competitive tendering where feasible and not resulting in over-specialized, non-standard units when not required.

   - Bus routes reflect the most cost-effective combination of bus types, given the configuration of the County and the location of schools and residences.

   - The number of buses is based on route designs which are translated into system-wide operational needs. The number of buses permits efficient bus utilization, including opportunities for non-school use, while allowing for reasonable downtimes for repair and maintenance.

3. **Buses are acquired with due regard for economy**

   - Responsibility for all steps in the acquisition process are clearly defined.

   - Buses acquired meet specifications.

   - Acquisitions are initiated with sufficient lead time.

- Policies for County acquisition and ownership versus commercial rental are clearly defined and lead to the lowest overall cost of the system while meeting transportation needs.

- Within budgetary constraints, and given continuing needs, unit replacement is timed to minimize life-cycle costs.

- The County tendering policy is followed unless exceptions are authorized appropriately based on lower life-cycle costs. Volume discounts are obtained where feasible.

4. Utilization costs are minimized while meeting standards

- Policies and procedures are defined and implemented for the qualifications, testing, hiring, training, insurance, assignment and supervision of bus drivers. These policies and procedures lead to safe, dependable and efficient school busing.

- Levels of service and regulations are established for accessibility (within walking distance of residences), dependability (on-time performance), travel times, loading, safety, and student behaviour.

- Compliance with these standards is periodically monitored and reported.

- Standards for bus utilization are established and actual utilization and performance are monitored. Disposal, rental, and alternative use options are examined for low utilized units.

- Procedures are in place and followed to ensure adequate security and custody of buses.

5. Maintenance costs and performance are controlled

- Decisions on the number, size, location, and equipping and staffing of maintenance facilities and the allocation of maintenance responsibilities are based on appropriate cost information and service needs.

- Utilization of maintenance facilities and staff is monitored and controlled and taken into account when adding or deleting services.

- Where feasible, maintenance is scheduled so that it does not cause operational problems for schools.

- Policies for in-house or contract maintenance lead to minimum overall maintenance cost to the system.

- Maintenance performance is measured and ways of improving productivity are actively sought. Performance targets are set in terms of bus availability, downtime, quality of service and cost; performance measures indicate if targets are being met. Performance are reasonable in comparison to appropriate standards.

6. **Disposal yields net benefit to the County**

- Repair/replacement/disposal are regularly reviewed.
- Buses are disposed of when there is no continuing need for them.

U. DATA PROCESSING SERVICES

1. **Data processing systems and resources are planned in accordance with approved policy**

   - ► The Board has a data processing policy which establishes objectives, roles and responsibilities for data processing applications and related functions.

   - ► Strategic and operational plans for education system data processing exist. Responsibilities for planning are clearly defined and communicated.

   - ► Strategic plans are based on assumptions about future requirements of all parts of the system and changes in technology. They identify alternatives and the chosen approach to developing and maintaining DP applications, and provide objectives that can be measured.

   - ► Operational plans are developed in accordance with the strategic plan and consistent with the Board's DP applications policy. These plans result from an analysis of potential projects and senior management assessment of relative priorities.

   - ► Applications planning is coordinated with other long-range planning activities in the system.

2. **DP applications meet user needs**

   - ► Users participate fully in the design of applications systems and can rely on the systems to produce the information they need.

   - ► Information produced is timely, accurate, and relevant to the user's decision making authority. Standards for accuracy and timeliness are established with the users.

   - ► Users formally accept new or modified systems, receive adequate training, and are fully informed of their roles and responsibilities in system operation.

   - ► A valid project control methodology is applied to all systems development projects, encompassing the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of all applications.

   - ► Completed development projects are evaluated to ensure that the project's objectives have been fulfilled, that the approved methodology was followed, and that user needs are being met.

- Modification of existing systems are controlled by procedures which cover user involvement, planning and implementation.

- Systems development decisions include consideration of alternatives, full costing of alternatives, proper budgeting and adequate cost control.

3. **DP applications are operated efficiently**

   - Users and systems designers are required to justify the level of service requested and the associated cost.

   - Responsibility is assigned for coordinating and assessing information requests and solving operational problems.

   - Appropriate measures of service level and operating cost are maintained, encompassing related user activities as well as DP processes.

   - Management is kept informed of performance, periodically reviews the efficiency and effectiveness of major systems, and takes appropriate action.

4. **Data processing resources are acquired economically**

   - Facilities planning is coordinated with applications planning.

   - Acquisition proposals are evaluated in relation to the approved strategic plan. Major commitments are justified by a feasibility study.

   - The introduction of new hardware or operating system software is preceded by appropriate implementation planning, training and documentation.

   - Management reviews major acquisitions after installation to ensure that the expected benefits were achieved.

5. **DP facility utilization is monitored, costed, and reported**

   - DP department properly allocates facility costs to user applications and accumulates full DP costs. These costs are reported to users and management.

   - Reporting systems keep management informed of the performance and productivity of the DP facilities in a manner permitting proper control.

6. **Computer facilities and information are adequately protected**

- ► All data are classified in terms of the security level required for sensitivity and protection from loss. Cost effective security measures exist.

- ► Procedures for ensuring completeness, accuracy and authorization of data input and computer processing are in place. Access to data is controlled in relation to need and sensitivity. Audit trails permit verification of correct operation.

- ► Contingency and disaster plans for ensuring continuity of processing of critical applications are prepared and periodically tested.

- ► Procedures for reporting and follow up of operational problems and control breakdowns exist.

V. MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

1. **Supplies are acquired at least cost**

   - The acquisition process adheres to the relevant contracting criteria. Contracts are negotiated and administered to ensure material is acquired to specification at least cost, taking into account delivery, service, and opportunities for bulk purchasing.

   - Where local and non-local suppliers' prices and other terms are equal, the local supplier is selected.

2. **Inventory control, storage and distribution are cost-effective**

   - Suitable inventory management systems are in place to ensure an optimum level of inventory consistent with service needs and costs.

   - The number, size and location of storage facilities are based on costs and service needs.

3. **Adequate custody and physical security are maintained**

W. CONTRACTING

1. **When make or buy trade-offs are being considered, analysis is reported fully, accurately and objectively**

   - The objective is to achieve the optimal combination of quality, time and total life-cycle costs of the service.

   - Included in this process is a statement of requirements with respect to performance specifications and standards, (time, service and cost), and analysis of different ways to meet the need.

2. **Contracting policy is clearly established and communicated**

   - There is a clear written statement of the Board's general policy and objectives in contracting for goods and services. This is communicated to management and interested parties.

3. **Tender and bidding procedures are documented and communicated. Procedures are consistent with statutory requirements and include:**

   - A statement of items/services eligible for tender consideration including types of services/goods and/or dollar amounts as appropriate.

   - Standard procedures for bid-solicitation including advertising policy, tender openings, bid withdrawals/changes, assessing and awarding of tenders and account payments.

   - Statements of roles and responsibilities throughout the contracting process.

   - A statement of circumstances when the standard tendering procedures might be waived. In such circumstances, there is a written justification available to interested parties.

   - Appropriate procedures to record and control contract commitments, implemented and enforced.

4. **Fees for service are incurred only for services authorized and performed and are calculated at the approved rates**

   - Written contracts are established.

   - Contract amendments are in writing.

- ► Budgets in relation to contract amounts are established.
- ► Fee structures are independently assessed.

5. **Fees are recorded appropriately as to account, amount and period and monitored against budgets**

Appendix B

RESULTS OF THE EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE SURVEY

Appendix B

RESULTS OF THE EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE SURVEY

We administered a quality of work life survey to employees in the school system. The survey was completed by a total of 845 staff. Of these, 33 were from central office and 812 from schools. The total staff also consisted of 648 professionals and 197 classified. The 812 school staff consisted of 61 administrators, 577 teachers, and 167 classified staff.

We prepared one report for each school and four more general reports that group the responses into various categories: central office versus schools, professionals versus classified, central office departments, and schools by sector. The general reports are available in the Office of the Superintendent.

Overall, the general levels of satisfaction of employees appear to be higher in the schools than they are in central office. Within the schools, the opinions are more favourable among administrators and classified staff than they are among teachers.

With respect to central office, the major concerns, held by over half the employees, were lack of adequate communication and excessive workloads. The physical working environment, in particular ventilation and temperature, also came in for a lot of criticism. Central office staff tend to have less loyalty to the organization, less job satisfaction, and less confidence in management than do school staff, although in absolute terms their responses in these areas are reasonably positive. The vast majority of central office staff believe their pay is lower than people in similar jobs in other education systems.

Of particular note is that less than 1 in 3 central office employees consider that the central office departments have good relationships with one another. Even within departments there is somewhat less of a cooperative effort at central office compared to schools. These concerns are reflected in other somewhat negative attitudes. For example only 2 out of 5 are satisfied with their future with the school system. Only 1 out of 5 believe that the communications employees receive is adequate. Most view change as creating more problems than it solves. About 1/2 are proud to work for the organization compared to 3/4 of school staff. And only 2 out of 5 believe they can give an honest opinion without any worry.

Within central office Assistant Superintendents have more positive views than professionals and professionals more positive views than classified staff.

Within central office departments, Curriculum and Instruction is most concerned about job stress and workload. Pupil Services is most concerned about relations between departments and lack of communications. Work space, lack of

neatness and cleanliness, inadequate rest rooms, noise level, and lighting come in for strong criticism in Personnel department.

Over one-half the Curriculum and Instruction staff say that they are not sufficiently involved in decisions about their work and that their performance is not adequately recognized and rewarded. Two out of three do not believe they have a chance to get a better job in the system. Other major concerns are lack of information on what is going on in the organization and, again, uncomfortable temperature and ventilation. More than a third of the employees are concerned about friction in the department, have less interest in their jobs than they used to have and lack of confidence in management.

Within Pupil Services staff there is a clear criticism of relations with other departments: not working together to solve common problems, not considering effects on their department, a high degree of inter-departmental conflict. The next most important concern is too much work to carry out their jobs adequately and lack of communications about what is going on in the organization. Ventilation and temperature are again criticised.

In Personnel department, the negative comments on the physical working environment are very high and cover all aspects: ventilation, rest rooms, temperature, cleanliness, work space and noise. Otherwise the department appears to have fewer concerns than other department. And in general has more favourable responses to most other questions.

At the school level, there is a clear demarcation between the administrators and the classified staff on the one hand, who have on average more favourable responses, and the teachers on the other hand who have on average more negative responses. Teachers' responses are lower than the other two groups in particular in terms of recognition of performance, job stress, communications, confidence in management, and job satisfaction. However in almost all instances the teachers' responses are considerable higher than available norms. Only in the areas of economic well being, physical environment, recognition of performance, and job stress is their any serious cause for concern. Job satisfaction, job interest and loyalty, are all commendably high.

We also analyzed the responses by sector: senior high, junior high, elementary/junior high, and elementary. In general the junior high and to a lesser extent, elementary schools showed more favourable responses. The elementary/junior high, and in particular, the senior high schools showed more negative responses. Senior and junior high schools were particularly concerned about physical working environment. (All schools commented very unfavourably on ventilation and temperature). Junior high schools are viewed as having insufficient space and poor lighting. In senior high schools, rest rooms and noise levels were the most criticised. Within the senior high schools it is again the teachers rather than the administrators who have the concerns, particularly in the areas of physical environment, recognition of performance, and employee

involvement and influence. Again however, we stress that these are relative comparisons. In absolute terms the responses are highly favourable in most dimensions.

The questionnaire responses were also analyzed by individual school. For each school the responses are grouped by administrators, teachers and classified staff and compared to the average responses for the sector to which the school belongs. These individual school reports have been distributed only to school principals. We recommend strongly that principals share the results with their staff, discuss with them appropriate steps that may be taken to resolve any concerns and make a commitment to address those concerns.

Appendix C

RESULTS OF THE RESIDENT SURVEY

Appendix C

RESULTS OF THE RESIDENT SURVEY

We conducted a survey of residents of the County of Strathcona to determine their attitudes towards the public school system. A copy of the questionnaire is attached.

A total of 385 persons responded to the survey. Slightly more than a third had attended school themselves in the County and about two-thirds have children who currently attend school in the County. Two hundred and nine of the 385 have children in the public school system.

The overall responses to the survey are strongly favourable towards the system. Seventy-seven per cent agreed strongly or agreed somewhat that the County provides good education. But 87% of those with children and 90% of those with children in the public school system agreed that the County provides good education. Similarly 80% of those who expressed an opinion were very or somewhat satisfied with the school system. Almost all (94%) of those with children in the public school system agreed that it was important to continuing improving the quality of education. Most people (63%) thought that the system had not changed significantly over the last few years. Fifteen per cent thought it had improved and 11% thought it had become worse.

While there is an overall high degree of satisfaction, typically 2 out of 5 parents have specific concerns about the system. The main concerns seem to centre on:

- Teacher and student evaluation.
- Too lenient discipline.
- Lack of information on system policies and activities.
- Distribution of time amongst subjects and among categories of students.

We discuss these concerns in detail below.

We asked a number of questions directed towards how resources were allocated. We asked if the system was doing enough for the physically handicapped, the learning disabled, the intellectually gifted, the athletically gifted, students taking English as a second language, and students in Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan. In all cases over half the parents with public school children thought enough was being done for each group. However almost half thought that not enough was being done for the learning disabled (46%) and

the intellectually gifted (48%). On average about one-third of parents would like to see more done for the other groups.

We asked whether additional available funds should be spent on transportation, buildings, new courses, special needs children, administration and more teachers. Special needs children and more teachers were the highest priority. Special needs children were even more of a clear priority with parents of children in high school.

There was a clear tendency for people to stress that more time should be given to core subjects. Forty-two per cent of parents with public school children thought more time should be given to English and Math. This percentage rose to 49% for parents with high school children. Also significant was the 39% of public school parents and 44% of high school parents who thought more time should be given to manual arts. Very few parents thought that less time should be given to any subject. In most cases they thought the time allocation was in fact appropriate.

Almost half the respondents believe they do not receive enough information about the school system. Interestingly 64% of non-parents think they do not receive enough information compared to 42% of parents.

Nearly half of those with an opinion (46%) thought that student discipline was too lenient. Only 1% thought that discipline was too strict. The proportion that believed that discipline is too lenient increased as the children get older -- from 38% of primary children's parents to 46% of high school children's parents. A higher proportion (55%) of respondents with no children in the system also believe that the discipline is too lenient.

Half the respondents believe that student are not properly evaluated. And two-thirds of the respondents believe that teachers are not properly evaluated. This opinion is of course particularly strongly by those who are somewhat or very dissatisfied with the school system.

Comments related to the education budget do not seem to give rise to much concern. Of all respondents, 63% thought the budget level was about right, 20% thought it was too high, and 17% thought it was too low. Over 80% of parents of junior and high school public students thought the budget was about right. Similarly, 68% of respondents and 76% of parents with public school children thought the level of instructional fees was about right. Six per cent of the latter group thought instructional fees were too low and 18% thought they were too high.

Appendix D

RESIDENT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

I.D. _____

RESIDENT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Good (afternoon, evening) my name is _____. I'm calling on behalf of Thorne Stevenson & Kellogg. We are conducting a survey on the attitudes of Strathcona County area residents 18 years of age and older toward the County's public school system. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and you will not be associated with the survey results in any way.

1. What is the highest grade you have completed in school?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

2. How many years of post secondary education have you completed?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____

3. Have you ever attended school in Strathcona County?

1 Yes

2 No

3a Was it: (read list; record one response only)

1 public

2 separate

3 both

8 don't know

4. Do you have any children who are attending or have attended school in Strathcona County?

1 Yes

2 No

4a Was it: (read list; record one response only)

1 public

2 separate

3 both

8 don't know

4b. If you have children **now in the public school system,** are they: (Read list; record one response only)

1 in primary grades, 1-6

2 in junior high grades, 7-9

3 in high school grades, 10-12

4 none attending

5. Please listen to this statement: "The Strathcona County School System is providing students with a good education." Do you: (read list; record one response only)

1 agree strongly

2 agree somewhat

3 disagree somewhat

4 disagree strongly

8 don't know

6. Please listen to this statement. "It is important to continue improving the quality of public education, even if it means increased expenditures by the County." Do you: (read list; record one response only)

1 agree strongly

2 agree somewhat

3 disagree somewhat

4 disagree strongly

8 don't know

7. I'm going to read you a list of student groups. Please tell me if the Strathcona County School System is, or is not, doing enough for each group. (Read list)

		Enough	Not enough	Don't know
a	physically handicapped students	1	2	8
b	students with learning disabilities	1	2	8
c	intellectually gifted students	1	2	8
d	students with athletic abilities	1	2	8
e	students who speak English as a second language	1	2	8
f	students living in Sherwood Park or Fort Saskatchewan	1	2	8

8. If more funds were available for the public school system, in which area should it be spent first? (Read list; record one response only)

1 transportation

2 school buildings

3 developing new courses

4 assistance for students with special needs

5 administration

6 hiring more teachers

8 don't know

9. The school system teaches a variety of subjects. More time is devoted to some than others. I am going to read you a list of some of these subjects. Please tell me whether you think more time, less time or the same amount of time should be spent teaching them. (Read list)

	More time	Less time	The same	Don't know
a. English	1	2	3	8
b. Sciences	1	2	3	8
c. Physical Education	1	2	3	8
d. Mathematics	1	2	3	8
e. Drama	1	2	3	8
f. History	1	2	3	8
g. Manual Arts	1	2	3	8
h. Social Studies	1	2	3	8
i. Art	1	2	3	8

10. Do you feel you receive enough information about what is going on in the public school system? (Record one response only)

1 yes

2 no

8 don't know

11. The school system levies an extra charge to students involved in areas such as band, vocational education or the industrial arts. These charges, used to help pay for the cost of the material required, are called instructional fees. On average, these fees may amount to about $50 per year per student. Do you feel that these instructional fees are: (Read list; record one response only)

1 too high

2 about right

3 too low

8 don't know

12. How much money do you think the Strathcona County School system spends each year? (Read list; record one response only)

1 Less than 20 million dollars

2 21 - 40 million dollars

3 41 - 60 million dollars

5 61 - 80 million dollars

4 Over 80 million dollars

8 don't know **(go to Q. 14)**

13. Is this level of expenditure on the Strathcona School System: (Read list; record one response only)

1 too little

2 about right

3 too much

8 don't know

14. Do you feel that discipline in the County schools is: (Read list; record one response only)

1 too strict

2 about right

3 too lenient

8 don't know

15. Some people believe public schools should emphasize teaching a standard set of core subjects like Math and English. Others think students should be given more freedom to take "elective" courses. Do you favor: (Read list; record one response only)

1 more elective courses

2 a standard set of core subjects

3 both

8 don't know

16. Do you feel that enough is being done to properly evaluate the performance of: (Read list)

		Yes	No	Don't know
a	Students	1	2	8
b	Teachers	1	2	8
c	Principles and other administration	1	2	8

17. Would you say that in the past 2-3 years your opinion of the County school system has: (Read list; record one response only)

1 become better

2 stayed the same

3 become worse

8 don't know

18. Which of the following best describes your attitude toward the Strathcona County School System. You are (Read list; record one response only)

1 very satisfied

2 somewhat satisfied

3 somewhat dissatisfied

4 very dissatisfied

8 don't know

This is the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your time.

Record dependent's sex:

1 male

2 female

Record time of interview:

1 before noon

2 between noon and 5 pm

3 after 5 pm

Record date of interview:

_____ _____ 1986
Day Month

Appendix E

FOCUS GROUPS

Appendix E

FOCUS GROUPS

A. INTRODUCTION

We conducted three focus groups with parents of children currently in the Strathcona County school system. The focus groups were conducted during the week of May 26, 1986, with the following numbers of participants, at:

- Fort Saskatchewan Junior High School (18).
- Woodbridge Farms School (15).
- Brentwood Elementary School (17).

Each session began with a brief description of the system review and how the focus groups fit into the process. All participants were assured that their opinions would be kept confidential. No one was asked to indicate his or her name, although everyone did introduce themselves.

The sessions were divided into three parts:

- First participants were asked to indicate their expectations of the school system, that is, the standards by which they would judge its performance.
- Then they were asked to focus on the actual performance of the school system in relation to those standards.
- Finally they were asked to make suggestions for closing any gap between performance and expectations.

At the end of the session we had a general open discussion.

Each session lasted about two hours. All participants were encouraged to telephone us and relay any additional opinions that occurred to them subsequent to the focus group.

In the following sections we simply report the opinions of the parents as actually expressed by them. None of the following comments should be interpreted as being our opinion.

B. FORT SASKATCHEWAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

1. Meeting student needs

One participant provided a list of his expectations of the system. These were:

- High academic standards.
- Discipline.
- Challenge to the students.
- Recognize failure as such: as it occurs in life, it should be recognized in the school system.
- Help children work their way through their failures.
- Teach effective communications skills.
- Teach effective reasoning skills.

All schools should provide the same quality of education. the quality varies significantly from school to school.

Teaching is done only to a minimum standard. Bright students and slow students suffer at the expense of normal students in the middle. There are many special programs for slow learners, but not much at all for the bright ones. A number of parents believe their children are bright, that they are not performing up to their level, and that the fault is not with the children but with the system.

The system should be flexible enough to accommodate itself to children, particularly bright children. It should be less bureaucratic and able to deal with children who fall outside the bounds of normal behaviour.

The system promotes conformity rather than excellence. Individual students should move at their own pace. Academic streaming should be introduced so that students could be grouped by their ability and move at a faster or slower pace. Ways should be formed to make the system fit the kids rather than the kids fit the system.

Everyone wants more information on how their children are doing relative to others, both in the school system and throughout the province, because ultimately their children will be competing against other children of the same age. The willingness of teachers and principals to provide details on children's performance varies widely. In some cases they receive the teacher's personal opinion. Parents also do not know the meaning of the new (1-4) rating scale.

A few parents feel athletics should be less emphasized. More parents want the status of academic performance elevated by such mechanisms as rewards, public notices, press reports, and so forth for academic as opposed to athletic achievement.

2. Facilities

There should be "equal rights for all schools." New schools are favoured with new equipment over old schools. Parents of children in older schools are expected to raise money to buy equipment that is provided by the system for newer schools. When they do raise money, the school system withdraws the funds allocated for such expenditures, thus causing a net loss to the schools as a result of the fund raising.

3. Parent involvement

The system should be more responsive to suggestions for improvement from parents, and parents should hear of the results of those suggestions.

Parents should be treated seriously by teachers and administrators. They should not be given "mumbo-jumbo references to academic studies and distant authorities" when asking for an explanation of teaching methods. Parents should be allowed to play a larger role in the structuring of the education of their children.

Trustees are not very willing or able to be effective spokesmen for parents' concerns. Parents should have access to administrators without having to deal with trustees. The Board frequently retreats behind in-camera proceedings. Their meetings are long, boring, and frequently fruitless.

Demands as well as opportunities should be placed on parents to get more involved in the system. Parents should be made more responsible for the behaviour of their children. To some degree problems in the school system are the results of parents failing to take this responsibility. The system's expectations of parents should be clearly expressed to them.

4. Teacher and principal evaluation

Failure to evaluate effectively the performance of teachers was most criticized. "There is no good way of getting rid of a bad teacher." Parents should have the opportunity to input to teacher evaluation. The system frequently assigns teachers to teach grades or courses for which they are not qualified. This was a failing of the administration, not of the teachers.

Along with criticism of teachers, there is a strong undercurrent of sympathy for teachers. Teachers do not have enough status in the school system. They are "lower on the totem pole than janitors or bus drivers." Teachers are as much victims of an inflexible bureaucracy as students and parents.

The failure to evaluate teachers properly is also the fault of the Alberta Teachers' Association, a body designed to protect teachers regardless of performance. Standards for teachers are weak and the ATA is too powerful. Teachers know who is not teaching effectively, but are afraid to speak out because of fear of retribution from the ATA. Greater use should be made of consultants for teacher evaluation. Principals should be required to pass on complaints about teachers to someone outside the school, so that complaints could be dealt with objectively.

The role of principals has changed from the senior educational authority and standard setter to an administrator who looks after everything from the furnace to the budget. No objective standards exist for the performance of principals. Their roles are weakly defined so that principals are able to define their jobs as they want to. There is not enough objective testing of either students or teachers. The testing should be a main responsibility of the principal.

If a system of rigorous evaluation is adopted, there should also be a way of helping those who are found to be deficient to overcome their deficiencies.

5. Funding

It is not reasonable to expect the school system to meet all the needs of all the students. But where a parent wishes to send his children to Edmonton, the parent should not have to pay twice, i.e. taxes to the County and tuition to another school system.

If additional money is available, they would spend it on additional specialized staff rather than on equipment or amenities such as rugs for the floors, or paint on the walls. Too much money is being spent on facilities. More should be spent on teachers and teachers' salaries.

More information should be provided on the percentage of children, especially those living in Fort Saskatchewan, forced to go outside the County for education.

6. Other

Children seem to come home quite early quite often, with no explanation of why they had been let out of school.

C. WOODBRIDGE FARMS SCHOOL

1. Meeting student needs

The system should allow each student to be himself or herself. The system was too rigid and designed for the average student. Marking on the bell curve results in conformity to average expectations. Students should receive more individual attention.

The system should do a solid job of providing basic information. A number of children aged 12 to 16 are illiterate. This is the result of over-concentration of the slower or brighter students and insufficient attention to the average student. Students were categorized too much, resulting in some students being held back. Classes are too large. The average size of 26 to 28 students precludes individual attention.

The system should "slow down." The system should be teaching cooperative rather than competitive values: teaching children how to work together is a more effective way of preparing them for later life.

2. Boundaries

Students should be able to attend any school within the County. Many children drop out of school because they are forced into courses or schools they did not wish to attend. Students (from Edmonton) can come into the County and attend any school they wish. The administration pushes students into particular schools that serve the interests of the system rather than the student. For example a number of students are directed to the vocational school, because a lot of money is being spent on the school and it had to be filled up in order to be justified. If open boundaries were in effect, there was one school that no one would go to. Open boundaries would force administrators to improve the quality of deficient schools.

3. Programs

Higher academic standards should be developed for earlier grades. Schools should teach social skills and the value of tolerance. Some feel that basic religious education was a good idea, others that it was not.

Teachers use too many surrogates such as films, VCRs, field trips, professional development days and other devices rather than instruction to occupy students. One parent's child had taken the same field trip three times. Another's child had gone skating four times in one month.

French ought to be taught at an earlier age. The French immersion program is supported, but is regarded as being poorly taught.

More physical activity is required particularly for younger children who grow inattentive because they do not expend excess energy.

More should be taught about Canada, particularly Canadian History.

Too much emphasis is placed on what children think and not enough on teaching basic facts.

4. Teacher evaluation

Teachers ought to be judged on their merit and not on seniority. The current system does not adequately determine the quality of teacher performance and provide a mechanism to remove bad teachers. Parents should be given an opportunity to comment during teacher evaluations. Outside staff should be used more on teacher evaluations. The Board and administration does not act on complaints about particular teachers. The trustees are not willing to act on poor teacher performance.

Teachers, principals, and other administrators should be periodically rotated and should have the opportunity to take a year off to see the world and recharge their batteries.

5. Parent involvement

Parents needed a better forum in which to express their ideas. The existing structure, including the Board and the trustees is not an adequate mechanism.

Parents have to lobby for years to convince the system to make changes beneficial to their children. The system is very slow to react. There are too many administrators and too much bureaucratic overhead in the system which in turn is contributing to growth in costs.

There should be a County-wide parent organization controlled by the parents themselves. Parent advisory groups are ineffective. Parents are intimidated by them and do not feel comfortable at meetings with trustees.

Teachers go on the defensive when parents complain. This simply builds a wall between parents and teachers. The fact that teachers and principals do not want to see more parental involvement is a major barrier to communication. One parent suggested greater involvement of grandparents teaching knitting, bread making, crocheting, and other traditional domestic skills, and of retired professionals such as doctors and engineers.

Teachers should be encouraged to speak up. Parents have the "silent support" of teachers, but they were unwilling to criticise administrators.

New readers and other educational materials should be reviewed by parents.

6. Other

Children should be allowed into schools before the set time in bad weather. Children are forced to line up outside the school regardless of how cold it is.

School trustees should be paid considerably more in order to improve their quality.

Teachers should set a moral example for students by such actions as not smoking during school hours.

The number of teachers in the system should be increased.

D. BRENTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1. Meeting students needs

Each child should be functionally literate and should reach his or her maximum potential.

The system should develop each child's self-esteem. Students should be treated as individuals who could progress at a rate at which they are comfortable. There is too much competition in the system, harming children's self-esteem. Once a low self-esteem is established it becomes worse as the students get older. Grade 1 starts too fast; there is too much competition there, including physical education. Success is defined as beating the other kid.

The system "notices kids" only when they fail or become behavioural problems. As long as they conform to the image of the average student they are given little individual attention. The system provides too many dollars and too much attention for special interests at the expense of children who do not have special needs. Students should be given a more thorough academic assessment. Those likely to develop problems should be identified earlier in their educational careers. Teachers do not have enough preparation time. The time they do have is spent on dealing with problem children, reducing the time available for dealing with normal children.

Each child should undergo continuous progress regardless of their ability compared to others. The system is geared to the middle or average child. Those at the top and bottom fare worse. Some disagree with this, but all agree the system is not flexible enough to allow students to progress at their own pace. Too much is done for the convenience of the system and not enough for the personal development of the child. Not enough is done to serve the emotional needs and development of children.

The system should give less emphasis to academic instruction and more emphasis to emotional development. Class sizes should be reduced and more time spent providing individual instruction to students. More testing of basic skills such as writing and spelling should begin in grade 3 or 4. More emphasis should be placed on checking the progress of children and on tailoring instruction according to the results of the testing.

2. Programs

The system does not emphasize sufficiently the basics such as spelling and grammar. There should be more writing and less use of multiple choice and true/false questions. The latter make it difficult for teachers to determine students' intellectual progress. As one put it, teachers should be able to see what the kids can do. Homework should be given less stress. Some assignments are of no value. Teachers should do more of the marking and rely less on students marking each other's papers or on computers for marking.

Standards of academic performance should be spelled out more clearly and adhered to more rigorously. The Board should do more to support special education programs. More teacher in-service, consultations, publicity of special education programs and their promotion were called for. Language education is included in the definition of special education. It is unfair that children in several special language programs have to be transported by their parents.

French should be offered as early as grade 3 or 4.

3. Facilities

Each child should have the same quality of facilities. The quality of school facilities varies greatly. Rural schools are less well equipped than urban schools.

4. Teacher evaluation

The ATA perpetuates poor teaching by protecting poor teachers. Principals should ask parents more often what they thought about teachers. Because they don't, a large number of poor teachers remain in the system. The generally poor quality of teachers raises questions about the quality of teacher education. There are also a large number of good teachers. These should be singled out, paid more, and otherwise rewarded for superior performance.

Teacher performance should be evaluated on a regular basis. This evaluation should involve consultation with parents. Evaluation should also be extended to school administrators. The influence of the ATA should be reduced. As part of evaluation, continuous upgrading of teachers is required, particularly

to help them overcome the deficiencies identified by evaluation. Teachers should take classroom management programs and courses to tell them how to enhance rather than to degrade students self-esteem.

Teachers should take a sabbatical every five or six years to "learn something about the real world." Principals should not be allowed to stay in one school more than five years. Principals should go back to teaching after five years and give others a chance to serve as principals.

5. Board and administration

There is a "upper echelon" of administrators, trustees, and teachers who reinforce each other's views and feed off each other's opinions. This small group makes recommendations to the Board and makes decisions about what is best for a school without consulting widely enough. Teachers in general do not get enough backup from administration.

Trustees do not understand what is really going on in the schools and have no real knowledge of education. They do not investigate key issues sufficiently when they come up for decision. Their views are so individualistic and they are so sensitive only to the opinions of people living in their districts, that they are unable to come together for a coherent analysis of difficult questions. They should have more background before becoming trustees and should be more involved in the classroom. To achieve this, they should be paid more. The role of school trustee should be a full-time position.

6. Boundaries

Boundaries should be open. Closed boundaries restrict students from "getting to good teachers." Because of closed boundaries, parents have no choice about the teacher available to their children. Anyone should be free to attend any school they wish. Arbitrary age guidelines for both entering school and moving from one grade to another should be relaxed.

7. Busing

The busing system is inefficient. Three or four different buses travel on the same route to pick up students attending different schools. A consolidated system with one bus assigned to each route to convey students to different schools would make more sense. Administration does not answer suggestions from parents about busing. They refuse to look into the question. Drivers also feel the system is inefficient and their suggestions are also ignored.

8. Parental involvement

More should be done to encourage a healthier relationship between parents and teachers. There is a substantial amount of suspicion and uneasiness now. Teachers need more instruction on inter-personal skills. They should be trained about methods of dealing with parents.

The system should do more to explain to parents what their role should be and give them options for their involvement in the system. They should be given background information on new teaching practices and theories, so that they can more fully understand what teachers do.

Parents should have more input into the operation of the school system. Greater parental involvement is crucial especially at the junior high level. Better teachers and better teaching would result from this. The Board should do more to make parents aware of their rights as parents.

A new form of parental involvement is required. Open houses are a "joke." There is not enough time to have an adequate discussion with the teacher. Again there is substantial sympathy for teachers in general. This sympathy is not extended to school administrators.